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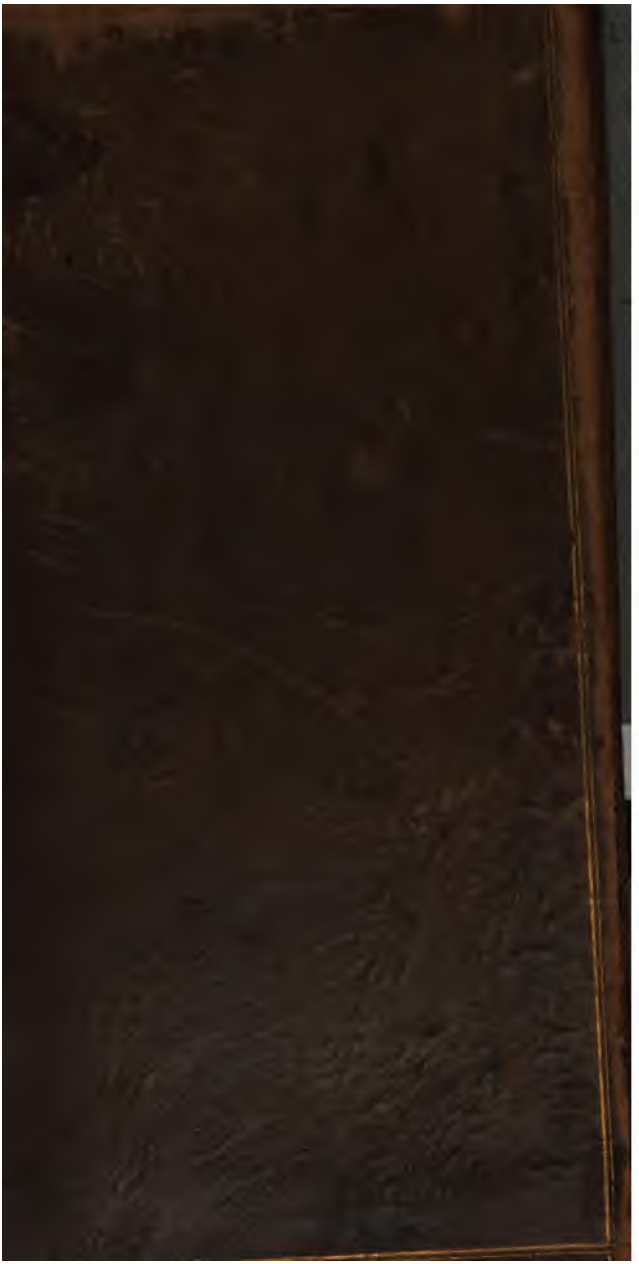

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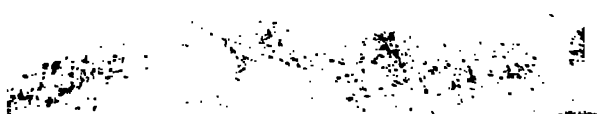

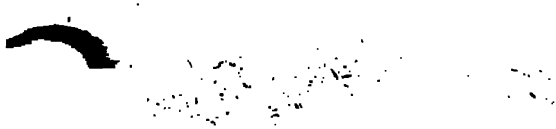

DIALOGUES

ON SOME

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

DRAWN UP

After the Manner of SOCRATES.

DIALOGUES

ON SOME

Important Subjects,

DRAWN UP

After the Manner of SOCRATES,

For the Uſe of

HIS SERENE HIGHNESS

The PRINCE of SAXE-GOTHA,

By Mr. VERNET,

Profeſſor in HISTORY and BELLES LETTRES
at GENEVA.

LONDON,
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THE

*TRANSLATOR's

PREFACE.

THE affected obſcurity, that many writers have introduced into their method of treating thoſe ſubjects, which are of the higheſt importance, and of the moſt general uſe, has been detrimental to the progreſs of ſolid ſcience, and often defeated its beſt purpoſes. When truth is perplexed and clouded with a multitude of *puzzling terms*, *imaginary diſtinctions*, and *laboured diſcuſſions*, it loſes

* The Rev. Mr. A. MACLAINE, Miniſter of the Engliſh Church at the Hague.

that perſpicuity that enlightens the underſtanding, and that noble ſimplicity that touches the heart. This is particularly the caſe with reſpect to *moral* truths, which are deduced from the moſt *ſimple principles*, and founded on the moſt *obvious relations*. It would make a ſober man laugh to ſee Philoſophers ranſacking the whole *Ideal* world, and combining the forces of *Metaphyſics*, and even *Algebra*, to prove that we ſhould ſerve God and love our Neighbour. Abſtract reaſonings have indeed their place; they are often neceſſary, and even ſublime; but they are very improperly applied to *moral* truths, which muſt be deduced from obſervation and experience, referred to inward principles and feel-

feelings, and illuſtrated by familiar and ſtriking images founded upon the *analogy* of things.

The wiſdom of SOCRATES, in his method of arriving at moral truth, held forth a model that was worthy of the imitation of all ſober inquirers. He had the wonderful and maſterly art of making the moſt ignorant ariſe to knowledge, by propoſing to them ſimple queſtions, that developped their ideas, unfolded their ſentiments, and made them thus pronounce, themſelves, the very truths which he deſigned to teach them. He enriched the mind with treaſures drawn from itſelf, and it may with juſtice be ſaid of him, that he drew even from the

mouths of *babes* the ſublimeſt wiſdom. The loftieſt tree is contained, in miniature, in a ſmall ſeed, and only grows and expands itſelf by being properly cultivated; in the ſame manner, the moſt vulgar minds contain the latent *ſeeds* of the richeſt knowledge, which, when drawn forth by culture, ſprings up apace; but where this culture is wanting, theſe *principles* of knowledge eſcape even the *conſciouſneſs* of ſuch as poſſeſs them, and the ignorance of the mind ariſes from its inactivity. Never was there a man who knew, like SOCRATES, how to cheriſh and unfold theſe latent *ſeeds*. With a gentle and ſkilful hand he ſet them in motion; he made them *vegetate*, *bud*, *bloſſom*, and by an eaſy

and

and natural gradation drew from them the faireſt and the moſt delicious *fruits*. His queſtions, beginning upon ſelf-evident principles, aroſe to clear and immediate conſequences, that led the mind inſenſibly to the nobleſt diſcoveries. It was thus that truth aroſe in its native beauty, and in its full power, and, without perplexing the underſtanding, captivated and charmed the heart.

The learned and ingenious Author of the following Dialogues (whoſe merit is far above the praiſes of ſuch an obſcure pen as mine) has imitated, with dignity, the *Socratic* method. It is true that this *method* will only ſucceed in the hands of ſuch, as, like

him, are maſters of the ſubjects on which they write. To unfold with *plainneſs*, *perſpicuity*, and *eaſe*, truths which require penetration and nice diſcernment, is only the privilege of thoſe who know them intimately, and are perfectly and familiarly acquainted with them. A ſuperficial knowledge of truth will always produce *obſcurity* in thoſe that attempt to write; at leaſt, it will yield nothing that is ſolid and ſatisfactory; and it is impoſſible for an author to avoid perplexity in his *expreſſions* while he wants clearneſs and perſpicuity in his *ideas*.

The ſubjects, that are handled in theſe Dialogues, are of the higheſt impor-

importance, and contain a collection of the wiſeſt rules for the direction of mankind in their various relations whether *religious*, *civil*, or *ſocial*. The author indeed, by introducing SOCRATES as the principal perſon, was obliged to confine himſelf to Natural *Religion in* the dialogue that has religion for its ſubject; but he has, even there, ingeniouſly diſplayed the excellence and the advantages of *Revelation*, by the confeſſion of thoſe defects which attend the light of Nature, and the earneſt deſire and expectation of a farther diſcovery of the Divine will, which he puts in the mouth of this great Philoſopher. And, that this *confeſſion*, and *expectation* are not falſely, or by way of fiction,

attributed to SOCRATES, may be ſeen in the *note* upon that paſſage. In a word, thoſe Dialogues, tho' deſigned principally for the inſtruction of an *Illuſtrious Prince*, are yet of ſuch a nature, as renders them every way adapted to the advancement of uſeful knowledge, and ſubſtantial virtue, in every ſtation and condition of life.

The Reader will ſee, by the title that is prefixed to this work, that it was deſigned for the uſe of the Hereditary Prince of SAXE-GOTHA, from which *Illuſtrious Houſe* the *Britiſh* Nation derives one of its brighteſt Ornaments in the perſon of a ROYAL PRINCESS, whoſe virtues add a luſtre to her exalted rank, and whoſe hope-

hopeful *Off-ſpring* will repair a loſs, which, otherwiſe, we could never ſufficiently deplore. The editor of theſe Dialogues has informed us particularly of the occaſion on which they were wrote, and as he mentions in this account ſome things that relate to the method, that was uſed in the education of the Prince for whom they were drawn up, it may not be improper to inſert it here. I therefore give it in his own words, which are as follows.

Theſe Dialogues were compoſed at Geneva, by Mr. VERNET, *profeſſor in Hiſtory and Belles Lettres, for the inſtruction of his Serene Highneſs the be-*

hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha; and they were drawn up at the time that the Prince, in the ſtudy of antient Hiſtory, had proceeded as far as the life of Socrates.

There were two things that the author had here principally in view. The firſt was, to ſet before the Prince ſome examples that might ſhew him the manner in which Socrates inſtructed by familiar converſations, taking occaſion from every incident, that offered, to raiſe the mind gradually to uſeful and important reflections. The ſecond was to make uſe, at the ſame time, of theſe very examples to inſtruct his Highneſs in a variety of moral ſubjects.

The

The principal ſpeakers in theſe dialogues are SOCRATES, *and* EVAGORAS, *prince of Salamis in the iſle of Cyprus, who is ſuppoſed to have gone young to Athens, to purſue his ſtudies.*

This firſt dialogue, and thoſe that follow, will ſhew the manner, in which the prince is taught Hiſtory. In ancient hiſtory every thing is improved to moral purpoſes. Inſtead of loading his memory with proper names, facts of little conſequence, or uſeleſs dates, it is propoſed to ſet before him a connected ſeries of the principal and moſt important events. There is a particular attention beſtowed on the lives of illuſtrious men, the portrait of whoſe characters

are drawn to the prince, after which he is left to decide their merit, to approve, or blame this or that action, giving, at the same time, the reasons on which his decision is founded. This manner of proceeding is equally adapted to form his judgment and to improve his heart. Examples instruct more powerfully than precepts, because they are more striking, make deeper impressions on the memory, and are also more amusing.

When the prince shall have gone through a course of ancient history after this method, he is to apply himself to modern history in the same manner, only with this difference, that at then he will be farther advanced in age, and will

will have preſented to his view events that are more cloſely connected with the preſent times, it will, here, be neceſſary to direct his ſtudies to political, as well as moral improvement. By all this, he will not only learn what ſort of examples it is neceſſary to imitate in order to arrive at true virtue, and perceive the bleſſings that a religious prince draws down upon his perſon, but will alſo be inſtructed in the different forms of government, in the means that are adapted to render a ſtate flouriſhing, and happy, in the various methods that are required for this purpoſe in different ſtates according to their different conſtitution, and policy. He will obſerve alſo here the faults that many princes are chargeable with, in the admi-

adminiſtration of their government, and how different has been the fate of ſuch Sovereigns as were the darlings of their people, from that of thoſe unhappy Princes who were the objects of their hatred. In a word, Hiſtory is preſented to this Prince as a tablature that conveys the moſt uſeful inſtruction; and the deſign of thoſe who are entruſted with his education, is to form in his heart thoſe principles, that will render him capable of appearing with dignity in the amiable characters of the honeſt man, the chriſtian, the ſon, the friend, the huſband, the father, and the ſovereign.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is proper to inform the Public of the uncommon liberty I have uſed in the tranſlation of theſe dialogues. I have too often perceived the groſs inconveniences of tranſlations merely literal, not to be convinced that this liberty is juſtifiable, and that it will neither be diſpleaſing to the Author, nor uſeleſs to the Reader. When the *french idioms*, and manner of diction, are forced into *Engliſh*, the delicacy of the thought is often loſt, and the *genuineneſs* of our language is always corrupted. To avoid theſe defects, I have in ſome places rather com-

compoſed in the taſte of my Author, than tranſlated him literally. Every language has its peculiar manner of expreſſion, and every tranſlator, who deſires to give his work the eaſy *air* of an original, ſhould follow the thought of his Author only, unleſs it be in thoſe caſes, where his expreſſions are capable of being literally rendered, and that with elegance. Theſe caſes happen ſometimes, but not frequently.

I have taken yet a greater liberty: I have purſued, and (as it were) extended ſome thoughts, that are expreſſed with much brevity in the original, that I might thus render them more affecting to ſuch whoſe *penetra-*

tion

tion and *delicacy of feeling* might not be ſo great, as *thoſe* of the Illuſtrious Perſon for whom they were wrote. This may, perhaps, require an apology to the Author, but it needs none to the public. I have, however, done this but ſeldom, and with much caution; and *not* with *any view to* correct a Writer, whom I conſider as a model in point of erudition, genius, and ſtyle.

The faults that have eſcaped my own eye, will be readily obſerved by thoſe who look into this tranſlation with leſs partiality. Such, however, will treat them with indulgence, when they know, that my only deſign in this little work is to contribute

to

to the formation of *Youth*, by preſenting to the tender mind, in an obvious and amiable point of view, thoſe *truths* and thoſe *principles* which alone can render *man reaſonable*, and *happy*.

Nunc adhibe puro
Pectore verba, puer: nunc te melioribus offer.
Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens, ſervabit odorem
Teſta diu.

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DIALOGUE I.

CONCERNING

The Duties that relate to MAN in general, and thoſe that in particular conſtitute the true character of a PRINCE.

SOCRATES and EVAGORAS.

SOCRATES.

MAY I aſk you, Evagoras, what you were yeſterday looking at with ſuch attention and earneſtneſs, in thoſe ſpacious walks, that lead to the Pyræum?

EVAGORAS.

You were there alſo, I find, Socrates; I am ſorry not to have known that: I ſhould have made no difficulty to leave what I was looking at, for the pleaſure of your company.

SOCRATES.

This I take as an obliging inſtance of your politeneſs and friendſhip: But, pray tell me, what you would have left on my account?

EVAGORAS.

Why really the preference is no great compliment; for I was only looking at a Peacock.

SOCRATES.

A Peacock! that is the moſt beautiful bird in the world, and I cannot help thinking myſelf much obliged to you for ſo readily giving me the preference.

EVAGORAS.

'Tis true, there is nothing more beautiful than the figure of that charming bird: There is ſomething noble and majeſtic in its air and motions: The lively green that paints its feathers, is agreeably diverſified with various ſhades: Its neck is clouded with a bluiſh dye, that is perpetually changing

ing, each ſtep it makes, and when expoſed to the ſun, preſents to our ſight a beautiful ſucceſſion of azure and purple colours, that ſeem blended with gold: its head is adorned with a plume or creſt, that ſurpaſſes the luſtre of the Perſian Diadem, and then its tail, ſtudded, as the fable ſays, with the eyes of Argus, when it is ſpread out, and expanded in all its glory, is incomparably more gorgeous than the richeſt brocade.

SOCRATES.

I am charmed with your deſcription, Evagoras, and ſhould indeed be ſurprized at it, did I not conſider how early you began to enrich, by the reading of our beſt Poets, that uncommon genius, which you derive from Nature.—But while you dwell with rapture on the beauties of the Peacock, you ſay not a word of its ſinging.

EVAGORAS.

O! as to its muſic, Socrates, let us paſs it in ſilence; it is far from being of a piece with the reſt of the deſcription: you know what a vile ſqueaking cry it makes, that grates even thoſe ears, whoſe feeling is the leaſt delicate.

SOCRATES.

You ſee, Evagoras, that all perfections ſeldom or never are found in the ſame object: — Nature has blended ſhades of imperfection in her faireſt productions, and has ſo diſpoſed her gifts, that they in ſome meaſure counterbalance one another.—I find then you are diſguſted at the muſic of the Peacock; perhaps, you would like a Swan better!

EVAGORAS.

Doubtleſs, if we may depend upon what the poets ſay of its melody. I have been often ſtruck with the rich and lively white that ſhines in the plumage of that noble bird, nor have I leſs admired

that

that air of dignity and eaſe, with which it ſails along the ſtream; but I never had the pleaſure to hear it ſing.

SOCRATES.

It is not in this only, that the imaginations of the poets have tranſported them beyond the bounds of reaſon and truth. I find however that you would give the preference to a bird that could ſing; is it not ſo?

EVAGORAS.

Without compariſon: for though it is natural to be ſtruck with a fine figure, and a rich plumage, yet, I muſt own, one tires ſoon of this, when there is nothing farther to attract the attention: you ſee in a little time all that is to be ſeen, and a quarter of an hour will ſatiate your curioſity; beſides, if the Peacock is fool enough to open his beak, this is ſufficient to chaſe away the ſpectator. But, Socrates, I have a Canary-bird at home . . .

SOCRATES.

You are much more amuſed with this, I ſuppoſe.

EVAGORAS.

O much more: you yourſelf would be delighted if you heard it: 'tis a charming little creature. Such ſweet notes! ſuch warbling! ſuch undulating ſtrains! ſuch agreeable airs, and in ſuch an endleſs variety, that in reality the pleaſure is new every day.

SOCRATES.

All this naturally leads me to aſk you ſome queſtions, that ariſe from the very ſubject we have been ſpeaking of: tell me then, my dear Evagoras, if you ſaw a man of a noble mien, ſet out in a rich dreſs, and a ſplendid equipage, would this ſatisfy you?

EVAGORAS.

No ſurely: for, like the peacock, he might ſtill conceal ſomething, which would abundantly counterbalance all this finery.

finery. To form a judgment of the merit of ſuch a perſon I muſt hear him ſpeak.

SOCRATES.

You mean by this, I ſuppoſe, that if his converſation diſcovered, under this ſplendid figure, a character made up of ignorace, vanity, perfidy, and indiſcretion, that you would not be impoſed upon by his pompous equipage, or his Phrygian embroideries?

EVAGORAS.

Such things are only fit to dazzle fools; but in reality ſuch a perſon is good for nothing; and I ſhould look upon it as a diſmal lot, were I under a neceſſity of paſſing my life with him.

SOCRATES.

Since then your attention is ſo little engaged by the ſplendor of an outward appearance, what is it, that, you think, would adminiſter ſolid pleaſure, and have power to command your approbation and eſteem?

EVAGORAS.

That, Socrates, which I find in you. You have nothing of that outward elegance in your figure, or in your dreſs, that flatters ſo much the vanity of numbers, and makes them imagine they have a right to the public eſteem; and you are ſo little concerned about ſuch things, that you are the firſt to joke upon the frugality, or rather parſimony with which Nature has ſet out your perſon.—And yet, deſtitute as you are, of all theſe external recommendations, your company is ſought after by every one, not only as the object of their choice, but even of their ambition. You ſpeak with ſuch knowledge, and in ſuch an agreeable manner on every ſubject, that whole days ſpent in your converſation paſs unperceived, while the tedious preſence of the beſt dreſſed Spark with an empty head, and a ſhallow judgment, is not ſupportable even for an hour. What a diffe-

rence

rence is there here! excuſe the compa-riſon, dear Socrates, it is juſt like the Peacock and the Canary-bird.

SOCRATES.

Your compariſon is juſt, and there-fore needs no apology; beſides, in the manner you apply it, I take it as a com-pliment. But may I be ſo free as to tell you, that you are not quite conſiſtent with yourſelf?

EVAGORAS.

This is but too poſſible: my levity may have betrayed me into ſome incon-ſiſtency; but it is my happineſs, Socra-tes, that you are here to redreſs my er-ror: what then is the contradiction with which you accuſe me?

SOCRATES.

When we met here, the firſt thing you did was to launch out into the praiſe of the Peacock, and to deſcribe his beauty with an enthuſiaſtic ſort of admiration: and the moment after, you load with re-

proach and contempt ſuch men as reſemble him. Is this holding the balance even? Is this giving impartial judgment? ſhould you not rather praiſe ſuch perſons, in ſo far as they reſemble the beauties of this gaudy bird; though at the ſame time you might juſtly reproach them, as deſtitute of the ſuperior graces of knowledge, and the charms of converſation?

EVAGORAS.

Nay, Socrates, ſurely here I am not miſtaken. What! do you think that the qualities, that I admire in a bird, render a Man worthy of praiſe, and that a reaſonable creature can be honoured by the encomiums that are laviſhed upon an animal? In my opinion, man ſhould ſtand diſtinguiſh'd by a merit of a quite different kind.

SOCRATES.

And by what kind of merit, Evagoras?

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

By that kind that is ſuitable to the nature of Man.

SOCRATES.

Let us hear an example of this, Evagoras. Is ſwiftneſs in the race, or dexterity in hunting, eſſential to that kind of merit, which you ſpeak of?

EVAGORAS.

No certainly: many of the inferior creatures ſurpaſs man here: we ſhall never be able to run with the Stag, or to hunt with the Hawk.

SOCRATES.

What think you of a vigorous and ſkilful Wreſtler like Milo, who makes ſo much noiſe at preſent?

EVAGORAS.

Theſe are exerciſes to which many attach a certain ſort of merit, but methinks—

SOCRATES.

Methinks! what! don't you admire the proweſs of a man who can carry an Ox on his ſhoulders?

EVAGORAS.

Might I venture to ſay it, Socrates, I think there is no great difference, in ſuch a caſe, between the burthen and him that bears it.

SOCRATES.

You judge rightly: and you are of opinion, I perceive, that the praiſe of Man ſhould be derived from qualities ſuperior to theſe, even from the qualities of his mind. What think you then of an Aſtronomer, or a Poet? don't you look upon ſuch as perſons of merit?

EVAGORAS.

Let me think a little, Socrates; there is ſomething plauſible in this—but I dare not yet decide:—if I am not miſtaken, the character of a worthy man comprehends ſomewhat more than this.

SOCRATES.

Do you mean, that there are qualities more eſſential to the character of a man of merit, than theſe?

EVAGORAS.

Yes ſurely: for there are many worthy men, who are neither aſtronomers, nor poets; and on the other hand, there are many aſtronomers and poets, who are far from being worthy men.

SOCRATES.

There muſt then be ſome qualities more eſſential, than theſe, to the character of Man, and it muſt be our buſineſs at preſent to find them out. Now the way to this is very plain; we have only to enquire what thoſe things are, that man cannot diſpenſe with the want of: do you think, for example, that a Man can be without the faculty of *reaſoning?*

EVAGORAS.

By no means: for in whatever purſuits, or actions we may be employed, we will always find it, not only advantageous, but likewiſe neceſſary, to reaſon juſtly: every kind of application requires this:

this: and indeed without Reaſon, we ſhould be in no degree ſuperior to the brutes.

SOCRATES.

But tell me, is it poſſible to reaſon well, if we are entirely deſtitute of knowledge?

EVAGORAS.

No certainly, for by an ignorance of the ſubjects on which we reaſon, we muſt be inevitably led into perpetual miſtakes. Have I not often heard you ſay, that to reaſon, is to compare ideas? but how is it poſſible to compare ideas, if we are not furniſhed with a ſufficient number?

SOCRATES.

Your opinion then is, that the proper exerciſe of reaſon requires a certain degree of knowledge?

EVAGORAS.

Without doubt, for an architect might as well think to build without ſtones, and

and timber, as reaſon could pretend to form judgments without the materials that knowledge adminiſters, and the ideas that are furniſhed by obſervation and experience.

SOCRATES.

Thus far then, Evagoras, the matter is clear, and we are perfectly agreed; but we are not yet arrived to the point in view: for let us ſuppoſe a perſon furniſhed with the knowledge of various things, and perfectly qualified to reaſon upon them with juſtneſs and perſpicuity, but at the ſame time void of all principles of religion and virtue; would you look upon ſuch a one as a man of merit?

EVAGORAS.

On the contrary, Socrates, I ſhould think him doubly worthy of contempt, as in ſuch a caſe he muſt both oppoſe and pervert his reaſon, by not employing it in the regulation of his affections and in the improvement of his mind.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

You are of opinion then, that *piety*, and *juſtice*, *benevolence*, and *temperance*, are qualities eſſential to *man*, and that without them the character of humanity is incomplete?

EVAGORAS.

Without doubt: for what an unnatural ſpectacle is man, when characteriſed by impiety, and violence, licentiouſneſs and arrogance? What perplexity and remorſe muſt he create to himſelf? What miſery and diſorder will he not produce in the world? Can he ever be the object of eſteem or love, from any of his fellow-creatures? Muſt he not, on the contrary, be abhorred by gods and men?

SOCRATES.

I am delighted to hear you ſpeak with ſuch warmth on this ſubject: this ſhews a noble and generous heart, that glows with a lively ſenſe of the excellence and dignity

dignity of virtue. But permit me to lead you a little farther. We have found that *juſt reaſoning, a certain degree of knowledge, virtuous habits, and good diſpoſitions, are qualities eſſential to Man, without which he muſt be both highly contemptible, and unhappy.* But do you imagine that a *Painter*, for example, ſhould ſatisfy himſelf with the qualifications we have been here laying down?

EVAGORAS.

I think that ſince he has attached himſelf to this particular profeſſion, he ſhould endeavour to excel in it.

SOCRATES.

Your opinion then is, that *beſide that kind of merit, that is eſſential to the character of man in general, and with the want of which no man can diſpenſe, there is moreover a particular kind of merit, that is required as ſuitable to the rank and ſtation of each individual, and to the profeſſion or calling that they have embraced.*

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

You have perfectly explained my meaning, Socrates, and it is not without reaſon that they ſay of you, that you help people to think.

SOCRATES.

To form then a judgment of the merit of any perſon, what queſtions would you put to him, and where would you think it proper to bound your inquiry? Would nothing more be neceſſary than to inform yourſelf of his probity and underſtanding? Or would it not alſo be expedient to examine whether he had the qualifications that belong to his profeſſion and occupation in life?

EVAGORAS.

I think indeed that theſe two things ſhould never be ſeparated; ſo that after informing myſelf of the knowledge, judgment, and integrity of thoſe, whoſe character and merit I wanted to know, I would inquire farther how they diſcharged

ed the more peculiar duties of their reſpective ſtations: Is ſuch a Captain brave? Is ſuch a Philoſopher learned? Is ſuch an Orator eloquent? Is ſuch a Father or Mother aſſiduous in fulfilling, with tenderneſs, the parental relations? By ſuch queſtions as theſe, when the occaſion preſented itſelf, I think, I ſhould come to the knowledge of that *merit* of which we have been ſpeaking.

SOCRATES.

This, Evagoras, is judging well, and I am glad to ſee that you ſo perfectly apprehend the matter now before us. But, prithee tell me, what do you think of the condition of a PRINCE? is not this alſo a rank in life that indiſpenſably requires certain qualifications?

EVAGORAS.

Undoubtedly it does: the obligation more peculiarly incumbent on a Prince, is, to govern well.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

This is true: but what do you underſtand by governing well?

EVAGORAS.

Governing in ſuch a manner, as to ſhed abroad the ſweets of peace and happineſs throughout his People.

SOCRATES.

But what muſt a Prince do in order to the accompliſhment of this noble end?

EVAGORAS.

He muſt enact good laws, and give them an additional force and majeſty in his example: he muſt make them to be reſpected by the puniſhment of guilt, the protection of innocence, and the encouragement they afford to merit and virtue: he muſt endeavour to render his ſubjects religious, ſober, induſtrious, and pacific; reſolute notwithſtanding to defend their liberties and maintain their rights with valour, againſt the inroads of tyrants, and uſurpers; he muſt make

make the arts and ſciences flouriſh in his dominions, maintain the public order, and, as far as his obſervation can extend, muſt have an eye upon the various ranks that compoſe the State, that he may ſee how each diſcharge the duties of their reſpective conditions.

SOCRATES.

It is not poſſible, Evagoras, to explain better, than you have now done, the duties and obligations that are incumbent on Princes. Such wiſe ſentiments, at ſuch a tender age, as yours, while they excite my admiration, muſt at the ſame time give me the moſt pleaſing hopes of your future progreſs in noble attainments.—You don't think then, that a Prince ſhould reſt ſatisfied with the acquiſition of an ordinary kind of merit?

EVAGORAS.

An ordinary merit is ſuitable to an ordinary ſtation; but I am perſuaded that

that a Prince ſhould look higher than this; having ſo great a taſk to fulfill, he ſhould endeavour to excell others in virtue and knowledge as far, as he ſurpaſſes them in rank and dignity.

SOCRATES.

Remember, O Evagoras, the great truths you have been now pronouncing, and let the ſolemn impreſſions of them never be effaced in your heart.—But do you think, that in order to the attainment of theſe noble qualities, there is nothing farther requiſite than to place them in your view, with an intention and deſire to be poſſeſſed of them?

EVAGORAS.

I think indeed, Socrates, that a good deal depends upon this; and I have heard you ſay, that deſiring any thing earneſtly goes a great way towards the attainment of it; and the reaſon is, I ſuppoſe, that ſuch deſire excites our activity and zeal in purſuing the means that are proper

per to accompliſh the end we have in view: but I am, however, very ſenſible that with the greateſt ardour, and the beſt intentions, man may frequently fail for want of capacity and ſkill. Here lies the difficulty: and that I may queſtion you in my turn, tell me, Socrates, how this ſkill is to be acquired?

SOCRATES.

It is to be acquired by the inſtructions of able maſters, when they are received with docility and attention. There is much aſſiſtance to be derived alſo from a judicious choice of books, which are indeed a rich and abundant ſource of wiſdom and knowledge. But what I would have you chiefly obſerve here, is, that there is nothing more proper to form the judgment, and to improve the heart, than good examples, good converſation, and good company. This is a kind of inſtruction, which conſtantly, tho' imperceptibly, inſinuating itſelf into our hearts

hearts, and producing inſenſibly inward habits, ſeldom fails to produce its effect. This article, however, would lead us too far, were we to enter upon it at preſent; beſides, I perceive that the hour obliges you to retire.

EVAGORAS.

It is now, Socrates, that I find myſelf under a neceſſity of making an apology for my comparing you with the Canary-bird: I had then in view only the pleaſure of your converſation, but now I ſee that every thing in it is uſeful and inſtructive.

The end of the firſt Dialogue.

DIALOGUE II.

Concerning the conduct that is to be obſerved towards Inferiors.

PROTHYMUS, SOCRATES, EVAGORAS.

PROTHYMUS.

HOW lucky is it, Socrates, that we have the pleaſure of meeting with you at this time? You could never come more ſeaſonably: we have been diſputing upon a point of ſome importance, and who more proper, than you, to decide the matter?

SOCRATES.

What! two intimate friends, and not of one mind?

EVAGORAS.

Not always: friends are not ſurely leſs friends becauſe they may happen

ſometimes to think differently; nay, I ſhould imagine that if ever difference of ſentiments can be advantageous, it is particularly ſo among friends; for while diverſity of opinion tends to the improvement of knowledge, friendſhip enables men to ſuffer contradiction.

SOCRATES.

This is well ſaid, Evagoras. Your obſervation is admirable, and if ſuch wiſe maxims prevailed more generally in the world, the difference in opinion, that is unavoidable among men, would not be attended with that hatred and animoſity, that are a reproach to humanity. But, tell me, what was the ſubject of your diſpute?

PROTHYMUS.

We were ſpeaking of the conduct that ſhould be obſerved towards *Inferiors*: Evagoras alledges that we ſhould not treat them with any ſort of familiarity; and, for my part, I am quite of the contrary

trary opinion. Pray, Socrates, who is in the right?

SOCRATES.

A little patience: a judge does not determine ſo quickly; we muſt firſt have a true ſtate of the queſtion, and then hear the arguments on both ſides. Pray, what do you mean by *Inferiors*?

EVAGORAS.

There are *inferiors of ſeveral kinds*; for example, in a family, the children are ſubject to their parents, and the ſervants to their maſters; and in a ſchool, the *diſciples* are ſubject to their teachers. In a Court, the Miniſters and great Officers of State depend on the Prince, and a multitude of ſubalterns are dependent one upon another. In the Army, the Soldier is below the Captain, as the Captain himſelf is in ſubordination to the General. In a word, thoſe who are obliged to obey, in whatever poſt or ſtation it may be, are *inferior* to thoſe whoſe privilege it is to command.

SOCRATES.

And does it not alſo happen, that thoſe who are ſuperiors with reſpect to ſome, may be inferiors with reſpect to others?

EVAGORAS.

This happens always: the Captain who obeys the General, commands the ſoldier; and indeed this is the caſe in every condition of life: there is ſcarcely any man, who has not ſome below him, and others above him; and who, in conſequence of different relations, is not, at the ſame time, both ſuperior, and ſubordinate.

SOCRATES.

You ſtate the matter juſtly, Evagoras: *Superior* and *Inferior* are only qualities relative to the higher or lower rank of thoſe, with whom we appear in compariſon; and we may obſerve farther, that even with reſpect to the ſame rank, there are Inferiors of different kinds, and

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in various degrees. But do you imagine that thoſe diſtinctions of rank, which we now ſpeak of, are ſo conſtituted by *Nature*; and that, if by any accident an illuſtrious Noble, and a poor common Sailor were caſt away together upon a deſert Iſland, the former could claim any authority to command the latter?

EVAGORAS.

Really, in ſuch a caſe, I am afraid that Nobility would make but an awkward figure, and that the advantage would lie on the ſailor's ſide. The hardy mariner, laborious, and dexterous in providing for the neceſſities of ſuch a ſad condition, would be much leſs out of countenance, than the poor Lord, who with all his titles would make but a wretched appearance, and ſcarcely know what to do with himſelf.

SOCRATES.

What is it then, Evagoras, that gives to one man the advantage over another in a *State of Nature?*

EVAGORAS.

Independent of the pre-eminence and authority that Nature has given to parents over their children, there is, I think, no ſuperiority that can be acquired over others in this ſimple ſtate, but in conſequence of bodily vigor, knowledge, and penetration, or eminent virtue; it is by theſe, that men can only be diſtinguiſhed in ſuch a ſtate, becauſe it is by theſe that they render themſelves uſeful and neceſſary to the community. But theſe however, properly ſpeaking, do not give them a title to authority and command.

PROTHYMUS.

I thank you, Socrates, for having led him, by degrees, to acknowledge for once the *natural equality of Men*; for it is upon this principle that I ſupport my opinion,

opinion in the preſent matter. Pray, Evagoras, be ſo good as not to forget this.

EVAGORAS.

You need not fear; I am however perſuaded that Socrates has yet ſomething to ſay upon this ſubject, which I entreat you not to forget, Prothymus.

SOCRATES.

You think ſo, Evagoras? let us ſee if you have gueſs'd well.—Prothymus muſt then anſwer me ſome queſtions, as it is proper that each ſhould have his turn.—Do you imagine, Prothymus, that men could have lived long in that ſtate of natural equality of which we have been ſpeaking?

PROTHYMUS.

This, I muſt confeſs, would be difficult; for it does not ſeem poſſible that ſociety can ſubſiſt, unleſs there be ſome that command, while others obey; it is alſo neceſſary that employments ſhould

be conferred on different perſons, according to the diverſity of their genius and talents; and I ſee plainly that this unavoidably leads to ſubordination and inequality.

SOCRATES.

You apprehend the matter perfectly, Prothymus, and have entered well into the true cauſes of that ſubordination, and diſtinction of rank, that we ſee eſtabliſhed in the world.—This is, however, a point that deſerves to be farther illuſtrated.—Tell me then, is a nation any thing elſe, than a collection of families, that compoſe one of a vaſt ſize?

PROTHYMUS.

I look upon it indeed in no other light.

SOCRATES.

And in a family is there not a certain ſubordination eſtabliſhed; and are there not certain diſtinctions, that characteriſe its different branches?

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PROTHYMUS.

Undoubtedly: the children are under the inſpection and government of their father; and beſides, even among the children of the ſame parents there is a certain precedence, by which the elder are diſtinguiſhed from the younger.

SOCRATES.

If then, Prothymus, the Athenian people may be conſidered as a great and numerous family, do you not think it neceſſary that there ſhould be certain fathers or chiefs, to inſpect and govern this large community?

PROTHYMUS.

Aſſuredly, Socrates, it is abſolutely neceſſary that ſome perſons of eminent wiſdom and virtue ſhould be cloathed with authority, to watch over, and promote the public good; for ſurely the inconſtant and many-headed multitude would never be able to govern themſelves.

SOCRATES.

And do you think that in time of war every man ſhould be left to act according to his humour and inclination, or his particular views of things?

PROTHYMUS.

No certainly: this would introduce the utmoſt confuſion, and muſt alſo end in weakneſs and ruin. It is only union in counſel, and union in execution, that can give force and vigor, with victory and ſucceſs, to the moſt numerous armies. And it is for this reaſon that each troop has its leader, and that both troops and leaders are ſubordinate to one, who commands in chief, that ſo one will and one direction may at once ſet in motion all the various parts of this complicated Whole, and make them all work towards the ſame end.

SOCRATES.

I would aſk you farther, if you imagine that it would be really of advantage

tage to ſociety, if every one embraced the profeſſion of all ſorts of arts and callings at the ſame time?

EVAGORAS.

I cannot help laughing at this queſtion, Socrates: what a ridiculous contraſt would it make, to ſee each citizen filling at the ſame time the poſt of Carpenter, Weaver, Doctor, Stateſman, and the other employments that are neceſſary in a ſociety?—Beſides, the man that graſps at all, will be perfectly ſure to ſucceed in none. There is no genius, there are no talents ſo univerſal, as to render any one capable of filling with dignity many different ſtations at the ſame time. And I have often heard you ſay, that this is not only a conſequence of human infirmity, but alſo of the wiſe appointment of Providence, that every one ſhould be inſtrumental in contributing to the public good. It is therefore fitting that each one ſhould confine

his views to one employment; and then ſurely things will go much better for the community.

SOCRATES.

But there is yet another queſtion, to which I would gladly have your anſwer. Are the various wants of ſociety the only cauſe that leads men to a diverſity of profeſſions? or does nature alſo point out this by the different talents, which it has beſtowed on different perſons?

PROTHYMUS.

Hold! Evagoras, it is my turn to anſwer. I think, Socrates, that nature points out in the plaineſt manner this diverſity of profeſſions, by the diverſity of geniuſes, inclinations, and talents, that ſhe has ſhed upon men from the riches of her wiſdom. One is fit for this employment, another for that. Some have a turn for the purſuit of ſcience, others for the exerciſe of the mechanic arts. There is none, as Evagoras juſt

now

now obſerved, whoſe genius is ſufficiently univerſal to ſucceed equally in every *profeſſion*; and I add, that there is not any, who, if he wiſely conſults his capacity, may not ſucceed in ſome.

SOCRATES.

But now, Prothymus, if in talents, and in the employments to which they lead, there is ſuch a diverſity; does not this, of itſelf, naturally produce a certain diſtinction among men, and form unavoidably different degrees of honour and credit in the various occupations of *life?*

PROTHYMUS.

It is true, thoſe who are only capable of filling employments that adminiſter to wants which are low and common, and have little in their executions that is not eaſy even to the meaneſt capacities, ſuch, I imagine, will neceſſarily attract a ſmaller degree of diſtinction and reſpect, than thoſe, whoſe genius riſes to objects

PROTHYMUS.

This, Socrates, is a queſtion, which puzzles me a good deal: for while, on the one hand, I conſider riches in themſelves, I cannot ſee that they give a man the leaſt title to diſtinction or eſteem; and yet, in fact, they ſeem to be an eaſy and natural path to credit and reputation in the world. And indeed it muſt be acknowledged, that riches are adapted to give a man weight and influence, as they enable him to contribute to the well-being of numbers, as well by employing them in his ſervice, as by extending to them the effects of his liberality; as they exempt him from the neceſſity of a conſtant application to the means of ſubſiſting, and afford of conſequence an happy leiſure for the improvement of his mind, and the employment of his labours in the ſervice of the Public. Add to all this, that a rich man can ſerve his Country by his wealth,

as an ingenious man does by his talents, and can give to his children such an education, as in elegance of taste, and useful knowledge shall distinguish them vastly from the common people. So that in all these points of view the rich man certainly has considerable advantages; and it must be owned that fortune produces, at least in process of time, certain distinctions of honour and rank, by the effects that thus immediately arise from it.

EVAGORAS.

I grow impatient to know the end that Socrates aims at in all these questions.

SOCRATES.

This, Evagoras, you will see presently: I only wait till Prothymus has told me his opinion about the utility of these distinctions, that are acknowledged and established in civil society. Let him first pronounce whether this diversity of rank and station, of which we have been

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conſidering the principal ſources, be, in itſelf, a bad thing, and ought to be entirely aboliſhed; and then you will ſee the uſe I will make of the queſtions I have propoſed.

PROTHYMUS.

I don't imagine it poſſible, nor indeed do I think it would be reaſonable, to baniſh theſe diſtinctions out of the world. They ſeem to reſult neceſſarily from the very nature of things, and man certainly receives abundant compenſation for the loſs of his *natural equality*, by the advantages he derives from living under the wiſe inſtitutions of *Civil Society*.

SOCRATES.

You grant, then, that there is a lawful ſubordination among men, which it is both wiſe, and neceſſary to maintain?

EVAGORAS.

I ſee now, Socrates, where your queſtions point. And this is the very thing that I was maintaining in our diſpute, that

that our conduct towards inferiors ſhould be entirely regulated by that ſubordination that is neceſſary in civil ſociety. A ſuperior muſt ſupport his dignity, and not permit his inferiors to be wanting in that reſpect which is his due. Did not I tell you this, Prothymus?

PROTHYMUS.

But pray, Evagoras, why do you forget what *Socrates ſaid, in the beginning* of our converſation, concerning the natural equality of men?

EVAGORAS.

This equality does not ſubſiſt, ſince we live under the regulations of civil ſociety.

SOCRATES.

Not ſo faſt, Evagoras: you are too quick in your deciſions: to judge aright in this important matter you muſt carefully attend to this ſolemn truth, that *human inſtitutions may modify the laws of Nature, but can never aboliſh, or entirely efface*

efface them. The dictates of nature are of a general kind; the wiſdom of man may accommodate them to the various circumſtances of life, but their foundations are unchangeable, and their obligations eternal. Evagoras, Evagoras, as long as mankind are formed out of the ſame duſt, and live upon the produce of the ſame earth; as long as there reigns among them ſuch a perfect conformity, ſuch ſameneſs of nature, ſameneſs of wants, ſameneſs of infirmities, and ſameneſs of reaſon; ſo long will they continue to be the very ſame rank, and ſpecies of beings: one man will always find in another his likeneſs, his fellow creature; and the meaneſt ſlave will be entitled to reclaim from the higheſt Monarch the rights of that *humanity*, which they enjoy in common, and partake of equally.

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

Methinks, Socrates, there is ſome contradiction between the two principles you have been now maintaining. You take it for granted that there ſtill ſubſiſts a ſort of *natural equality* among men, and, at the ſame time you inſiſt upon the neceſſity of *ſubordination*. Pray how do you reconcile theſe together?

SOCRATES.

You ſhall ſee immediately. But in order to this we muſt firſt be agreed about a third principle, which relates to the demands of *friendſhip*. Let Prothymus therefore tell us, in what manner he conducts himſelf towards his friends?

PROTHYMUS.

You ſhould rather put this queſtion to Evagoras. For my part, I treat them without ceremony. I give myſelf entirely up to them. I communicate to them my moſt ſecret thoughts. I apply to them for wiſe direction, and advice.

vice. I am deeply intereſted in whatever concerns them, and enjoy a high delight in their converſation, and ſociety.

EVAGORAS.

Prothymus repreſents the matter as it really is; and ſuch indeed is the nature of that familiarity and friendſhip that ſubſiſts between us. We ſpeak upon all kinds of ſubjects with the utmoſt freedom; we communicate to each other our pleaſures, our pains, every thing, in a word, even to our very ſecrets.

SOCRATES.

This is well: but do you unboſom yourſelf, in the ſame frank and open manner, to all, with whom you converſe, and are you diſpoſed to form thoſe intimate connexions of familiarity and mutual confidence with every one you meet, and without any diſtinction?—

PROTHYMUS.

No ſurely: I obſerve here a great difference.

SOCRATES.

And pray now, where would be the inconveniency of converſing equally, and forming connexions indiſcriminately with all ſorts of perſons?

PROTHYMUS.

A very great one certainly: ſince the converſation of all ſorts of perſons is not equally agreeable. I am as much tired and diſguſted with ſome, as I am pleaſed and delighted with others.

SOCRATES.

Is it then nothing more than pleaſure, and entertainment that you propoſe to yourſelf, in the connexions you form, and in the converſations you frequent?

PROTHYMUS.

I own, Socrates, I ſpoke inconſiderately, and I am obliged to you for this queſtion, which brings me to a ſenſe of my

my error. I ſhould have ſaid, that there are perſons in whoſe converſation there is no real improvement to be acquired. And indeed the caſe is not only ſo, but there are many, with whom familiarity is even dangerous and pernicious, tending to pervert our judgments, by giving us falſe notions of things; to corrupt our minds, by nouriſhing in us evil diſpoſitions; and even to hurt our intereſt, by abuſing the confidence we repoſe in them. There is nothing more dangerous than bad company; and as our friends compoſe that circle of company that we frequent moſt, there is nothing more neceſſary than to be cautious and prudent in the choice of them, and to make ſuch our friends, whoſe diſcourſe and whoſe examples may improve the judgment, and form the heart.

SOCRATES.

What you have now been ſaying, Prothymus, is in itſelf of the utmoſt importance,

ance, it has alſo an immediate relation to the point in view, and you ſhall ſee the uſe that I will make of it. In the mean time I deſire that you may not loſe ſight of the *principles*, concerning which you are both agreed. *There is among mankind an equality eſtabliſhed by nature, which can never be totally effaced.* This is the firſt point: we have alſo granted, that *there is a certain ſubordination, that reſults naturally from the different talents and capacities of men, and that is both juſt and neceſſary in Civil Society.* Our buſineſs then, at preſent, is, to reconcile theſe *two* ſeemingly jarring *principles*, and to add to them a *third*, even that of which we have been juſt now ſpeaking, *that it is of the higheſt importance to be extremely cautious and delicate in the choice of friends.* It is by uniting theſe three principles, that we will find a method of ending the controverſy that is between you, and of deciding the matter to your

mutual ſatisfaction. And indeed this union is moſt natural and eaſy, ſeeing there is no ſort of inconſiſtence, not the leaſt diſcord between the principles mentioned above, as will evidently appear in the progreſs of thoſe queſtions and obſervations that it will be proper to make in purſuing this ſubject. And here, in the firſt place, you will readily grant, that, in forming a circle of friends, our choice ſhould not fall upon thoſe, who have been ill educated, and whoſe converſation can be in no wiſe advantageous, or improving.

PROTHYMUS.

Certainly it ſhould not.

SOCRATES.

This however is the caſe with ſuch, as deſcend to a low and unreſtrained familiarity with ſervants, and perſons of the meaner kind. The converſation of ſuch is not only void of all inſtruction, and incapable of adminiſtring the leaſt improve-

improvement, but has alſo an unhappy tendency to corrupt the taſte and to degrade the judgment of young people, by *filling* their minds with falſe ideas, by cruſhing the generous efforts of nature, and enſlaving it to groveling notions, to *little*, to narrow, and confined views, and to vulgar and groſs habits, that have no tincture of elegance or virtue. *Error, credulity, envy, calumny*, inſipid flattery, or ſcurrilous and licentious raillery, ſuch are the infectious qualities that are to be derived from *mean and low connexions*: and as it is moſt natural to contract a reſemblance of thoſe, whom we intimately converſe with, in taſte and in diſpoſitions, I leave you to judge, whether, or no, ſuch converſations as thoſe above-*mentioned* will tend to improve our underſtandings or ennoble our hearts. And what renders ſuch connexions more particularly dangerous, is, that they remove that

reſtraint which modeſty impoſes upon Youth in the company of ſuperiors, or of perſons whoſe characters command reſpect. Before ſuch as are below us, we are leſs afraid to expoſe our weakneſs, or our vices: we dread not their cenſure, and by that means derive nothing from their preſence that is not rather adapted to encourage us in our errors, than to prevent or correct them. Arrogance, idleneſs, caprice, intemperance, every thing will go down with ſuch as a low and vile intereſt engages to a compliance with our humours and inclinations. Add to all this, that bad company has a fatal influence in deſtroying a reliſh for thoſe ſuperior connexions, that are honourable and virtuous; and unexperienced youth, that is naturally averſe to oppoſition and reſtraint, finds itſelf more at eaſe amidſt thoſe ſervile creatures, that applaud its follies, than in the ſociety of ſuch whoſe virtue

and

and ſincerity render them leſs complaiſant.

EVAGORAS.

Indeed, Socrates, ſuch as admit their domeſtics into the intimacy you mention, do not deſerve to have any other friends. I have heard it frequently obſerved, that ſuch ill-judged familiarity ſeldom fails to render our ſervants our maſters; ſo that *whoſoever is ſo mean, as to deſcend* to ſuch familiarity, will not fail to find himſelf governed by thoſe, whoſe inſolence he encourages by an ill-placed *condeſcenſion*.

SOCRATES.

True, Evagoras: ſuch perſons as know the weak ſide of their maſters, as are attentive to their humours and complaiſant to their paſſions, if they are entruſted with their ſecrets, and admitted to that intimacy which (by their abuſe of it) inſpires preſumption, this will lead them to aſſume authority by degrees,

and will in the concluſion put their maſters in their power. Slaviſh in their compliance, they are employed for conveniency; and, conſcious of ſecrets that often will not bear the light, they are feared by maſters, whom they have ceaſed to reſpect, and govern in a ſtation where they ſhould only obey. This is the misfortune of many Princes, who hear negligently, and only for the form, the advice of their Counſellors and Miniſters; while they are drawn away by the baſe and ſelfiſh ſuggeſtions of low creatures, who are the ſlaves of their caprice, and the inſtruments of their pleaſures.

PROTHYMUS.

What then is the right method of treating domeſtics, and in what manner ſhould we live with them?

EVAGORAS.

We ſhould live with them as with perſons that reſemble us by the participation

ſipation of the ſame nature, but who at the ſame time are ſubordinate to us in conſequence of the order eſtabliſhed in ſociety; as with perſons who are deſtined to be our ſervants, and not our counſellors. So that we muſt guard againſt every thing in our conduct towards them, that looks like contempt, diſdain, arrogance, or ill-humour. No injurious *language*, *no indecent* anger, no unjuſt ſeverity. Remember, Prothymus, that they are men, and that humanity, in whatever ſtation it may be placed, has always a juſt and unqueſtionable title to our benevolence, and affection. Let our language then to them, while it is addreſſed with authority, be tempered with gentleneſs. Let them be the objects of our care, and of our good offices, and let us correct their failings with clemency and moderation. Rage and invectives degrade and debaſe the perſon that employs them.

Hear what they have to ſay, and ſpeak to them with mildneſs, concerning thoſe things that belong to their ſtation and ſervice; but farther than this no converſation or familiarity, no jeſting or raillery. In a word, let them find in you a good maſter, but not an intimate, or a companion. While you preſerve this middle way between inhuman arrogance, and degrading familiarity, you will be the object of their love, and at the ſame time of their reſpect, eſpecially if you follow another direction that I cannot help adding upon this occaſion.

EVAGORAS.

And what is that Socrates? I am curious to hear it.

SOCRATES.

It is plainly this; that the orders we give ſhould never proceed from mere humour or caprice. Authority alone may indeed force an inferior to obedience, but ſuch obedience is performed with

with reluctance; it becomes a yoke inſtead of a pleaſure, and is neither animated by zeal, nor attended with reſpect. The great maſter, to whoſe government and authority every one ſeems willingly to ſubmit, is Reaſon. Let a command impoſed be ever ſo difficult, it is executed with pleaſure when it is found to be neceſſary and juſt: but if a ſuperior diſcovers, in the orders he gives, a whimſical inconſtancy of temper, if he commands thro' fancy, and is neither directed by wiſdom, nor prudence in the exerciſe of his authority, his ſervice will juſtly be conſidered as unequitable, and ſevere, and his ſuperiority will only ſerve to render him contemptible. He that deſires to be well ſerved, muſt take care to command wiſely; and in order to have our authority reſpected, we muſt begin firſt by reſpecting, ourſelves, the authority of reaſon.

EVAGORAS.

Theſe indeed, Socrates, are moſt excellent rules, and they may, I think, be eaſily applied to the conduct we ſhould obſerve towards inferiors of every kind. I acknowledge, on the one hand, that we ſhould treat them with mildneſs, while it is but juſt, on the other, to claim their ſubmiſſion and obedience, agreeable to theſe two admirable maxims, 1ſt, That we ſhould conſider them as partakers of the ſame nature, which we derive from the hand of one common parent. And 2dly, That we ſhould maintain that ſubordination that is neceſſary in civil ſociety.

SOCRATES.

Right, Evagoras: but you muſt alſo remember, that as even among thoſe that bear the general character of Inferiors there are various orders and different ranks; in a word, as all are not inferiors in the ſame degree, they muſt not

not all be treated in the ſame manner, but muſt be diſtinguiſhed by different degrees of attention and regard, in proportion as they are more or leſs ſubordinate in their different ſtations. Some faint mark of condeſcenſion and benevolence is not ſufficient towards many, that may be called inferiors; there are numbers in that claſs, who have a right to higher tokens of eſteem, and who really deſerve more conſpicuous proofs of affection and regard.

EVAGORAS.

Tell me then, I entreat you, what is the proportion that is to be obſerved in this matter, and how to adjuſt the different degrees of affection and eſteem, that are to be exerciſed here? A Prince, I am ſenſible, has inferiors of various kinds: he has Miniſters, Counſellors, Officers, and Courtiers of different orders, and ſubjects that fill all the various ſtations and conditions of life. How then muſt

he conduct himself with respect to all these?

SOCRATES.

Let us begin with the common people. And here I observe, that the Prince is obliged to shew, towards the meanest of his subjects, the ordinary marks of condescension and civility, and while he guards against whatever might carry the appearance of arrogance and disdain, he should also seek occasions of exerting that compassion and humanity which are the brightest ornaments of princely grandeur, and by placing acts of beneficence with propriety and discernment draw forth from the united voice of the public this glorious testimony, that he is a good Prince and loves his people.

EVAGORAS.

This, I am persuaded, is the duty of the Prince towards the body of the people. But I am impatient to learn the

the conduct that he muſt obſerve with reſpect to thoſe of a ſuperior rank.

SOCRATES.

The nobility, and thoſe who fill ſuch employments in the ſtate as are rendered honourable by being important, are to be treated with higher marks of diſtinction: the Prince muſt proportion his attention and regard to the dignity, the age, and merit of theſe, his more illuſtrious ſubjects. In the exerciſe of his condeſcenſion here it is always much better to exceed, than to be wanting in the leaſt point, becauſe it is a matter of the utmoſt conſequence to a Prince, that perſons of this order be ſatisfied with his government, and find ſomething engaging in his conduct and manner; it is of the higheſt importance that ſuch perſons find their ſituation at his court agreeable and alluring; that they attach themſelves with pleaſure to his ſervice, and be ready to embrace with

with ardour every opportunity of promoting his glory, and advancing his intereſts. On this really depend the pleaſure of his life, the grandeur of his reputation, and the ſucceſs of his affairs; and therefore he can ſcarcely exceed in thoſe acts of generoſity and condeſcenſion that have a tendency to procure ſuch uſeful attachments.

EVAGORAS.

But while you ſhew the duties incumbent upon the Prince towards the different orders of his ſubjects, that you have now mentioned, you ſeem to reſerve little for his more immediate and particular friends.

SOCRATES.

You are merry, Evagoras.—A Prince,—does he ſtand in need of friends? a fine ſtory indeed! no, no, let him amuſe himſelf with his grandeur, and be contented with the reſpect that is paid him, and the titles that he is loaded with, by ſub-

ſubmiſſive crowds. Friendſhip is only fit for little mortals, who creep in the obſcurity of private life.

EVAGORAS.

What! you baniſh Friendſhip then from Courts? what have poor Princes deſerved at your hand, that you thus rob them of the chief comfort which chears the life of man?

SOCRATES.

I don't think, Evagoras, that I injure them grievouſly in this matter, ſince they themſelves are rarely ſenſible of this comfort. They are much better pleaſed with ſervile complaiſance, than with the noble freedom of ſincerity and truth. It is flatterers that they ſeek for, and not friends.

EVAGORAS.

This, it muſt be owned, is too often the caſe; but ſuppoſe, for once, a Prince ſuſceptible of the charms of friendſhip, how muſt he conduct himſelf with

with reſpect to thoſe whom he chuſes for his friends?

SOCRATES.

This, Evagoras, is not ſuch an eaſy matter, as it requires the ſacrifice of a very delicate point, the total ſacrifice of that pride, that is the offspring of ſuperiority, and the parent of arrogance. A Prince who would become a friend, muſt deſcend from his grandeur when he acts in that character: in the commerce of friendſhip he muſt forget that he is a Prince, and this he may do without loſing his dignity, for thoſe to whom he appears as a friend will always remember that he is a Prince, nor will his condeſcenſion diminiſh their reſpect. It is certain, that an unreſerved frankneſs is the baſis of friendſhip, and that where there is not a reciprocal and equal freedom of thinking without reſtraint, and of ſpeaking what we think, that amiable commerce cannot ſubſiſt.

Upon

Upon theſe conditions you may acquire friends; upon any other, you will have only ſervants.

EVAGORAS.

I don't ſee the difficulty, which you ſeem to imagine, in eſtabliſhing that eaſe and freedom of commerce, that is eſſential to friendſhip. On the contrary, I ſhould think that nothing could be more agreeable to a *Prince*, than to ſtep aſide, at certain ſeaſons, from that tedious round of ceremony and conſtraint which attends their elevation, to enjoy the ſweets of freedom and eaſe in ſocial life. It is familiar converſe that repairs the fatigues of grandeur, and affords the ſofteſt and moſt delightful recreation amidſt the cares and labours of a princely condition.

SOCRATES.

This is certainly true, Evagoras, and thoſe Princes who are the moſt jealous of the honours and reſpect that their ſtation

ſtation demands, are ſenſible of it, and feel it in the languor that loads their ſpirits under the weight of their grandeur and a perpetual repetition of the ſame ceremonies. But what is the conſequence? why, they run from one extreme to another, and ſeek their recreation, not in a decent condeſcenſion to the delightful commerce of the Wiſe and Good, but in the converſation of domeſtics, comedians, and buffoons; which eclipſes their dignity, and debaſes their grandeur. Weak minds act ſeldom by a juſt meaſure. They ſoar, and creep by turns, and know not the middle way that leads between the towering heights of arrogance, and the groveling level of a mean familiarity.

EVAGORAS.

What then, Socrates, is that middle way that is neceſſary to be obſerved here?

SOCRATES.

A Prince that would follow this uncommon

common path, muſt chuſe amidſt his court, or in the country where he reigns, a certain number of perſons the moſt remarkable for their merit and virtue, their prudence and knowledge, the luſtre of their example, and the elegance of their demeanour; and with ſuch may he paſs both uſefully and agreeably the hours that he ſets apart for amuſement and converſation. In this ſociety, every thing relating to manners and behaviour ſhould be the ſame that is obſerved in what we call polite company in private life, where perſons are independent, where they aſſemble through inclination, and are united by eſteem. The Prince here muſt behave preciſely like a man of quality among his friends. He muſt require nothing on account of his rank. He muſt ſuffer contradiction; he muſt ſhew towards others that attention and politeneſs which he expects from them; and endeavour to

SOCRATES.

How has it fallen into your hands?

EVAGORAS.

I found it here as I was walking, where in all probability ſome one has dropt it out of his pocket. I have been carefully peruſing it, but I don't as yet apprehend what it means. Shall I read it to you, Socrates? and may I, at the ſame time, take the liberty to aſk your opinion of it?

SOCRATES.

I conſent readily to what you demand. But firſt, let us retire a little out of the common road. I ſee a place juſt fit for our purpoſe under the ſpacious ſhade of that beautiful tree. Let us remove thither. Now begin Evagoras.

EVAGORAS *Reads.*

"A certain young man, whoſe name "was PHILOTHEUS, was brought up in "a city of Epirus, without knowing "who

" who were his parents. His curioſity,
" which increaſed as he advanced in
" age, led him to diſcover, after many
" enquiries, that he had been acciden-
" tally caſt upon that coaſt with a nurſe,
" who was ſince dead: that his father,
" whoſe name was URANIUS, was of an
" illuſtrious rank, but none knew from
" whence he came, nor if he was yet
" living. The perſons, from whom he
" had theſe informations, gave him a
" bracelet of gold, on which was en-
" graven the name of URANIUS, with
" theſe two words: *Think and Search.*
" As this imperfect diſcovery only ſerv-
" ed to add new warmth to the deſire
" he had of finding out his origin, he
" ſet out ſecretly, one evening, in com-
" pany with EUPHRON, and embarked
" in a veſſel belonging to Cortya, which
" brought him directly to Corinth. Af-
" ter having made many fruitleſs en-
" quiries there, he reſolved to paſs thro'

" all

" all the cities, and maritime towns of
" Greece. A whole year was ſpent in
" this manner, when arriving at Phocis,
" he immediately conſulted the oracle of
" Delphos, and was told that he ſhould
" find what he was ſeeking in a coun-
" try where all the inhabitants were
" brethren. This anſwer was too ge-
" neral to give him the information he
" wanted; he therefore continued his
" enquiries; paſſed again the Ægean
" Sea, purſued his journey along the
" coaſts of Aſia, but in vain; for he
" neither found his father URANIUS,
" nor the amiable *Fraternity*, of which
" the Oracle had told him. On the
" contrary he ſaw, wherever he paſſed,
" diviſions and animoſities reigning
" among men, thro' the fatal influence
" of ſelf-love and ambition: he ſaw
" malice and envy embittering their
" ſociety and rendering them pernici-
" ous and deſtructive to each other.

How

"How different, ſaid he with an heavy "ſigh, are theſe unfriendly ſcenes from "that peaceful region of which I am "in purſuit!—To leave nothing un-"tried, he reſolved to return once more "into Thrace, where ſome ſacred re-"mains of the laws, and inſtructions "of the wiſe Orpheus had ſurvived the "ruins of time. In order to this, he "went on board a ſhip that was bound "for the Boſphorus; but ſcarcely had "they approached the ſtreights, when "a violent ſouth-wind drove them "back from the ſhore, and carried "them into the Euxine Sea. There, "toſſed to and fro by the raging tem-"peſt, their veſſel ſtruck, at length, up-"on a bank of ſand, near the mouth "of the Danube, and was daſhed in "pieces. While in theſe diſtreſſing "circumſtances every one was intent "upon the means of eſcaping, our two "Travellers were particularly fortu-

" nate. They ſeized on a plank and
" ſome proviſions, and committing
" themſelves to the mercy of the waves,
" were caſt, in five or ſix hours, upon
" a beautiful coaſt. They here offered
" up thankſgiving to the Gods for
" their deliverance, and after having
" dried their garments at the heat of
" the ſun, the firſt thing that they were
" ſolicitous to diſcover, was, whether
" the country was inhabited. There
" appeared certain traces of culture in
" the fields, that, together with ſome
" paths cut through the woods, ren-
" dered it highly probable that it was;
" but EUPHRON maintained that theſe
" marks proved nothing; ſince all they
" had ſeen might be the effect of
" chance, or ariſe from the ſport, and
" caprice of Nature. Let us advance
" then a little farther, ſaid PHILO-
" THEUS;—but what do I ſee? Tri-
" angles, and geometrical figures de-

" lineated

" lineated on the ſand! Theſe, ſurely,
" you will acknowledge, without heſita-
" tion, to be the work of man. I grant
" it, replied EUPHRON, and my doubts
" vaniſh; for beſides thoſe figures, I
" perceive other marks of human in-
" duſtry in thoſe cultivated plains that
" lie before us on the left hand, and
" thoſe ſhady foreſts, that are pierced
" through with walks and viſtas on
" the right. Obſerve thoſe riſing hills
" covered with vines, whoſe ſpreading
" branches are ſupported by rows of
" ſtately elms; thoſe meadows alſo
" in the diſtant vale watered by ſtreams,
" which the hand of art has certainly
" conducted through their verdant pa-
" ſtures, and that orchard that riſes
" beyond the meadows, not inferior in
" beauty to thoſe of Alcinous.—Every
" thing around us ſeems to proclaim
" the efforts of induſtry, and the ſweets
" of abundance; but I have not, as

" yet, obſerved a houſe in all this love-
" ly ſcene. Advance a little farther,
" replied PHILOTHEUS, and you will
" perceive, through thoſe trees, ſeveral
" cottages, in the midſt of which is
" placed an antient building, that looks
" like a Temple. There is ſomething
" grand in the aſpect of this edifice,
" that ſtrikes notwithſtanding its plain-
" neſs and ſimplicity.

" While they were thus engaged in
" diſcourſe, they perceived a company
" of Shepherds that advanced towards
" them, ſinging a Hymn, and dancing
" to its numbers, with gracefulneſs and
" proportion. Their heads were crown-
" ed with chaplets of flowers, and their
" looks expreſſed that chearfulneſs, and
" harmony, that are the amiable pro-
" gnoſtics of contentment and happi-
" neſs.—Tell me, ſaid EUPHRON to one
" of the Shepherds, what is the name
" of this ſmiling region, where every

" thing

" thing breathes innocence and joy? " You ſee, O Strangers, replied the " eldeſt of the company, the country " of *Adelphia*, where men live like bre- " thren, and from whence Lycurgus " drew the materials of his wiſeſt laws. " This is the feſtival of the Sovereign " of this place, which we celebrate with " tranſports of gratitude and joy, for " he governs us with the tenderneſs of " a father, and we derive from his " bounty the happineſs we poſſeſs. " EUPHRON here aſked, where this So- " vereign lived, and what was his name? " This building that you ſee, is his " palace, replied the Shepherd, and " his name is URANIUS. URANIUS! " cryed PHILOTHEUS in raptures, what " do I hear? EUPHRON entreated " the good old man to purſue his ſtory, " and to inſtruct him in the means " that URANIUS employed to render " them thus happy. The laws that

" he has eſtabliſh'd, continued the Shep-
" herd, are ſimple, and plain; they are
" few in number, but are founded in
" equity, and adapted to general uſe;
" thoſe who obſerve them, will not fail
" to ſurpaſs in ſolid wiſdom the deepeſt
" Philoſophers. He loves us as his
" children; he is attentive to our wants,
" in order to ſupply them; he corrects
" us with mildneſs, and moderates our
" paſſions; he makes us feel the power,
" and inſpires a taſte for the charms, of
" Virtue and Reaſon; hence we live in
" harmony and peace with each other,
" and he delights to ſee the concord
" that joins our hearts, and the happi-
" neſs that it produces in our lives.
" All that you ſee in this pleaſant re-
" gion, is the fruit of his wiſdom and
" the work of his hand. At one view
" he ſees all, and with the authority
" of a word he keeps every thing in
" order; each inhabitant loves and re-

" ſpects

" ſpects him as a father, and he is the
" ſubject of the hymn that we have
" been now ſinging. But why do I
" entertain you with an account of
" that, which you may ſee yourſelves?
" nothing will ſo perfectly convince
" you of the happineſs of thoſe who
" live under his inſpection, as the re-
" ception you will meet with, when
" admitted to his preſence, altho' ye
" be ſtrangers; and therefore I ſhall
" now conduct you thither. I long,
" cried PHILOTHEUS, for this happy in-
" terview! Come, EUPHRON, let us
" mend our pace; I have found what
" I ſought for. O my father! my
" dear father! how great, how in-
" expreſſible is my joy in coming at
" length to the knowledge of thee, in
" whom I ſhall find that ſatisfaction
" and repoſe that have ſo long fled
" from my moſt ardent purſuits!
" What pleaſure ſhall I enjoy from

" finding at length in thee, not only " the author of my life, but alſo a " powerful protector, a tender friend, " a bountiful benefactor, and an un- " erring guide? Here then is my coun- " try; I have, I deſire no other: O " happy event! O delightful manſions! " What tranquillity dwells in this ſweet " abode! And he that reigns in it, is " my father . . . .

Here Evagoras ceaſes to read.

SOCRATES.

Why do you ſtop ſhort, Evagoras, in the midſt of ſuch an intereſting narration?

EVAGORAS.

I ſtop with regret, but the paper will carry us no farther; it is unluckily torn at this laſt ſentence, ſo that we are left to gueſs at the concluſion of the ſtory. As far as I can conjecture, it muſt have ended with a tender and affecting ſcene, that reſtores a ſon to the boſom of a father,

father, and a father to the longing deſires of a ſon; and this diſcovery, no doubt, muſt have rendered PHILOTHEUS happy beyond expreſſion for the reſt of his days. What is your opinion of the matter?

SOCRATES.

I imagine, indeed, that the event muſt have been as you alledge; and if you have a deſire that the ſtory ſhould be finiſhed, you may, I think, very eaſily make the ſupplement yourſelf.

EVAGORAS.

Were it only a fiction, I could do this without difficulty; but perhaps it is the recital of a fact that has really come to paſs.

SOCRATES.

Let it be fiction, or truth, that is not material. Our buſineſs here is to ſee if it contains any thing from whence inſtruction may be drawn. Were it only an allegory, it muſt of neceſſity carry in it ſome truth or other.

EVAGORAS.

And what truths do you perceive here, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Let us examine a little this matter.—But tell me firſt, whither or no you approve the ſentiments of PHILOTHEUS?

EVAGORAS.

Approve them! nothing ſurely is more natural than the deſire of knowing our parents, and nothing more juſt, nothing more ſuitable, than the joy he diſcovers in finding out his father. Why, I think him, a ſecond Telemachus.

SOCRATES.

Your caſe, Evagoras, is different from his; you have had the happineſs of being educated in the midſt of your family.

EVAGORAS.

True, Socrates, and I am bound by the ſtrongeſt ties of gratitude to thank the Gods for this ineſtimable bleſſing.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

You will however eaſily perceive that your parents are not the original authors of your exiſtence, and that you muſt riſe above them to a ſuperior cauſe, who has formed the whole human race, and who is himſelf the uncreated ſource of every thing that thinks, lives, and moves.

EVAGORAS.

Without doubt; and the reaſonings, which I have often heard you employ on this ſubject, have perfectly convinced me that Man is as much the work of God, as any other part of the creation.

SOCRATES.

May not, then, this firſt Creator of all things be properly called our Father?

EVAGORAS.

He certainly is a Father in the true, and ſublime ſenſe of that word.

SOCRATES.

What then, Evagoras, do you think

of thoſe, who will be at no pains to come to the knowledge of this heavenly Parent?

EVAGORAS.

This, I muſt confeſs, diſcovers either an unaccountable ſtupidity, or a baſe and ungrateful turn of mind. PHILOTHEUS was of a quite different character.

SOCRATES.

But you, Evagoras, who are filled with a noble and rational deſire of coming to the knowledge of this great Parent, where will you ſeek him, and where, do you imagine, is the place of his abode?

EVAGORAS.

The ſovereign Intelligence cannot be confined to any place; for ſurely, Socrates, he that made all things, muſt fill all things; and I have heard you ſay, that the heavens and the earth are the habitation of his immenſity.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

We may then come to the knowledge of him without going far: that azure vault that is extended above our heads, that ſun that enlightens the world, thoſe ſeas, iſlands, mountains, and valleys, are all his work, and theſe are his domain. So that we ſee his operations, we inhabit his dwelling, and live upon his bounty. Say, Evagoras, what parent is like him, in dignity and grandeur? This is a father worthy of the moſt profound veneration and reſpect, the true URANIUS whom we ſhould all ſeek after.

EVAGORAS.

This, then, is the moral of the allegory I have been reading. I begin to imagine that he who ſo happily explains it, may have had a hand in compoſing it; and this is not the firſt time that you have taken ſuch methods to excite the curioſity of youthful minds.—That

ſmile

ſmile, Socrates confirms me in this notion: ah! now I ſee very well. . . .

SOCRATES.

It matters not, Evagoras, from what hand this paper comes: our buſineſs is to draw from it the uſeful inſtruction it may contain.—Is it not a very high ſatisfaction to the mind, to be able thus to diſcover through the whole of nature the marks of it's great Author?

EVAGORAS.

This muſt yield the ſame kind of pleaſure, that PHILOTHEUS experienced when he found out his father.

SOCRATES.

In reality the knowledge of God is the nobleſt ſcience that the mind can acquire. It rectifies our ideas by giving us, as it were, a key that opens the ſyſtem of the univerſe to our view; and hence it is the great and fruitful principle that renders the reſearches of philoſophy truly comfortable and ſatisfactory to the heart.

But

But theſe are not it's only advantages; it has many more when attentively conſidered.

EVAGORAS.

And what are theſe, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Its greateſt is to ennoble the ſoul, to calm our paſſions, and to regulate our manners.

EVAGORAS.

And how does it produce theſe happy effects?

SOCRATES.

Don't you think, Evagoras, that it is of unſpeakable advantage in the conduct of life to have excellent models placed in our view?

EVAGORAS.

Without doubt; nothing can ſo ſtrongly excite us to aſpire after perfection, nor ſo effectually aſſiſt us in the purſuit of it.

SOCRATES.

Yet when we take a view of human nature as it appears in a preſent ſtate, we ſee it almoſt every where obſcured with imperfection and vice.

EVAGORAS.

This indeed is but too true.

SOCRATES.

But the ſcene changes when we raiſe our thoughts to the Supreme Being.

EVAGORAS.

Surely, Socrates; for it is then that I feel my mind tranſported with the idea of a moſt pure, perfect, and exalted nature.

SOCRATES.

Don't you think then, that it would be noble in man, and of inexpreſſible advantage in the direction of his conduct, to place this venerable example in his view?

EVAGORAS,

This indeed would be the trueſt heroiſm;

roiſm; but man is incapable of forming his actions after ſo great a model*.

SOCRATES.

True, Evagoras, man cannot approach a model ſo high; but, notwithſtanding this, he ſhould always ſet it before him; becauſe by this he will always have preſent to his mind an idea of the *Supreme Beauty*, and *the Sovereign Good*; and there

* This objection, that Mr. Vernet puts in the mouth of the young Prince, is very natural; and indeed men are ſo generally incapable of fixing habitually their attention upon objects that have no ſort of relation to their outward ſenſes, that the example of a Being, purely ſpiritual, will too ſeldom attract them with force, or excite them to its imitation with warmth and vigour: and yet at the ſame time it is true that nothing leſs than an all-perfect Being can be a conſtant model for Intelligences whoſe progreſs will be eternal. It is here then that the wiſdom of God is peculiarly admirable in the plan of Redemption, where it diſplays the plenitude of all moral perfection in the likeneſs of our nature, and conſequently in a point of view every way adapted to command our attention.

are

are many caſes, where this great idea may excite to noble and generous deeds.

EVAGORAS.

As how, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Let a Prince or a Magiſtrate propoſe to himſelf the imitation of the Deity, muſt not this immediately ſtrike him with a ſolemn ſenſe of the obligation he is under to adminiſter juſtice with impartiality, and diſintereſtedneſs, with equity and wiſdom? ſuch have only to put this queſtion within themſelves; how would God govern men, if with an immediate hand, and in a viſible form he held the reins of civil ſociety? and ſurely thoſe who are his vicegerents upon earth ſhould govern in the ſame manner, as far as their unavoidable imperfections will admit. This is a compendious, but at the ſame time moſt excellent ſyſtem of morality.—Tell me, Evagoras, if you were always in the preſence

ſence of a man, that was rendered venerable by his wiſdom and virtue, would you venture to diſcover any thing immoral, or even indecent in your actions, or diſcourſe?

EVAGORAS.

No, Socrates, for I have often found by experience, how effectually your preſence could check the riſings of folly and paſſion.

SOCRATES.

If then the preſence of a mortal can impoſe ſuch reſpect, how much more ſhould we be reſtrained from unlawful purſuits by the preſence of that God, who never loſes ſight of us, even for a moment, but has his all-comprehending eye perpetually upon us? how is it poſſible that under a ſenſe of the inſpection of this Univerſal Mind, whoſe nature is ſo pure, and ſo averſe to iniquity, the heart of man ſhould dare to commit a crime, harbour a fraud, conceive a lye,

or

or indulge itſelf in diſhoneſty, ingratitude, or pride?

EVAGORAS.

I am ſtruck with your ſolemn reflections on this ſubject; but is it not true, Socrates, that an habitual attention to the preſence of God would keep the mind in perpetual fear and reſtraint? and yet, I think, you obſerved to me juſt now, that nothing was more agreeable, than to raiſe our thoughts towards the Supreme Being. I cannot well reconcile this.

SOCRATES.

You told me, Evagoras, in a very obliging manner, that my preſence excited in you a certain reſpect, that laid a reſtraint upon your paſſions; but I have not, however, perceived that it ever rendered you uneaſy.

SOCRATES.

Far from it, Socrates. I have ever found your company as agreeable as it is uſeful,

uſeful, and I ſhould be extremely uneaſy, were I deprived of it. By this you have made me ſenſible, that to be kept within bounds, by reſpect, gratitude, and eſteem, is not only very different from ſervitude and conſtraint, but is alſo a bond of the moſt delightful kind: there are none, whom we are ſo much afraid of diſpleaſing, as thoſe whom we truly love.

SOCRATES.

Your obſervation is juſt, and you have perfectly hit on the point of view in which this ſubject ſhould be conſidered. If then it is delightful to raiſe our thoughts to that Being who poſſeſſes all perfections, how muſt this delight be increaſed when we are permitted to approach him under the tender relation of a Father? how tranſporting to obſerve, through the whole of nature, the marks of his liberal hand, to caſt our ſelves on the care of his wiſe and good providence, and to hope that through the

the imitation of his perfections we ſhall one day be exalted to the participation of his felicity? O Evagoras, what raptures does this thought inſpire? What comfort does it adminiſter amidſt all the perplexities and changes of life?— You have ſometimes told me, that you obſerved an uncommon calmneſs, and tranquillity in my frame and temper....

EVAGORAS.

True, Socrates, I have often admired that uninterrupted ſerenity, that habitual good humour, which ſeem to raiſe you to an happy independence on the events and changes of the world, and which yield an inward ſatisfaction and contentment, far ſuperior to what was ever felt by thoſe who are called men of pleaſure, or favorites of fortune.

SOCRATES.

If it is true that I am poſſeſſed, in any degree, of this ineſtimable bleſſing, I owe it entirely to the conſiderations

now

now mentioned: theſe are my chief joy; theſe I look upon as my greateſt treaſure.

EVAGORAS.

I find myſelf much affected by the manner in which you ſpeak upon this intereſting ſubject. But there is, I think, ſomething yet wanting to complete our ſatisfaction here; for we cannot ſee this celeſtial Parent, nor hear his voice.

SOCRATES.

You miſtake, Evagoras: this ſatisfaction is by no means denied us; for ſince the *Univerſal Mind* is every where preſent, he muſt know our thoughts, and may alſo communicate his intentions to us.

EVAGORAS.

I comprehend perfectly that our moſt ſecret thoughts muſt be known to him; but I cannot ſo well conceive how we can come to the knowledge of his intentions

tentions and deſigns with reſpect to us.

SOCRATES.

When you read a book, do you not imagine within yourſelf that the author of it ſpeaks to you? Don't you ſee his ſentiments? Don't you diſcover his views? Is there not in reality a kind of converſation between him and you?

EVAGORAS.

This is indeed the caſe.

SOCRATES.

And what is Nature, but a great volume, in which the ſupreme Intelligence addreſſes itſelf to us in the moſt diſtinct characters, by the ſublime, though ſilent language of his works*, and

* This thought of Mr. Vernet is ſo happily expreſſed in that beautiful imitation that Mr. Addiſon has given of the xixth Pſalm, that we cannot help inſerting it here at length, as it never can be placed with more propriety.

THE ſpacious Firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial Sky,
And ſpangled Heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

The

the beauty and order they ſo richly diſplay. But it is not here alone that the ſovereign Being makes himſelf known to man: there is an inward voice

Th' unweary'd Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's Pow'r diſplay,
And publiſhes to ev'ry Land
The work of an Almighty Hand.

Soon as the Ev'ning Shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the liſt'ning Earth
Repeats the ſtory of her birth.

While all the Stars that round her burn,
And all the Planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.

What tho' in ſolemn ſilence all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What tho' nor voice be heard, nor ſound
Amidſt their radiant orbs be found?

In Reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging as they ſhine,
"The Hand that made us, is divine."

of deity that ſpeaks in his heart, and requires only our attention, to be heard diſtinctly.

EVAGORAS.

I would be glad to have this more fully explained.

SOCRATES.

Have we not ſuch clear ideas of certain truths, that we refuſe to admit, nay reject, without heſitation, whatever contradicts them; and on the contrary, do we not readily acquieſce in whatever is agreeable to theſe ideas?

EVAGORAS.

Without doubt: and theſe, I ſuppoſe, are what the Philoſophers call *firſt principles*, which ſerve as the foundation of all our reaſonings in the arts and ſciences.

SOCRATES.

And again, with reſpect to the conduct of life: have we not here alſo a certain rule, and certain principles, by which

which we diſtinguiſh between good and evil, juſt and unjuſt?

EVAGORAS.

Aſſuredly we have: and hence, I apprehend, all the various branches of morality ſpring forth, as from their proper root; and it is from the obſervation, or neglect of this important rule, that the conſcience of man rewards him with ſelf-approbation, or ſtings him with remorſe.

SOCRATES.

Do you think, Evagoras, that it is in our power either to change the nature of theſe *principles* that give us the firſt-notions of truth, and virtue, or to efface entirely their impreſſions in our minds?

EVAGORAS.

I cannot think that this is poſſible: no efforts that I can make, will ever be able to hinder me from believing, for example, *that the Infinite Being is ſuperior to the Finite*; *that ingratitude is wor-*

thy of blame; that the greater good is to be preferred to the leſſer; that we ſhould conduct ourſelves towards others, as we would deſire that they ſhould conduct themſelves towards us. Theſe are unchangeable maxims, univerſally received in all times and in all places.

SOCRATES.

To come then to our purpoſe: tell me, Evagoras, from whence do we derive this intellectual power that diſcerns truth, and this moral inſtinct that leads to virtue?

EVAGORAS.

We derive them from ourſelves, from our reaſonable nature.

SOCRATES.

Very well: but this is not going to the ſource; for who endowed us with this reaſonable nature? who has originally imprinted in our minds thoſe unchangeable ideas, thoſe firſt notions, on which all our reaſonings are founded?

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

I ſee where you would lead me, and perceive now clearly, that all this can only proceed from the Author of our being, the ſame great Mind that has diſpoſed with ſuch order all the parts of univerſal nature.

SOCRATES.

This indeed is the caſe, Evagoras; it is this ſupreme Being, who has given us this inward direction, and who ſpeaks to us conſtantly in the ſecret admonitions of reaſon and conſcience. This is the *good Genius*, which I have always gloried in as my director and guide, and which would equally be the guide of all men, were they diſpoſed to conſult him. Perhaps the goodneſs of the Divine Being will one day engage him to ſpeak in a more open manner to the children of men, and to expreſs in the terms of human language the dictates of his will, that their attention may be thus more powerfully excited when his ſolemn

voice reaches their ears†. But until that happy period arrives, let us read in the great volume of Nature which he has opened to our eyes, and attend to the ſecret language of our hearts, which is the faithful interpreter of his righteous will.

EVAGORAS.

This is undoubtedly our duty; but I can't help wiſhing, that this language was yet more ſtriking, than it is.

† The language that is here put in the mouth of Socrates, is perfectly conformable to the notions he had, as we may ſee in two of Plato's Dialogues. In that which is entitled *Epinomis*, after having obſerved, that piety is the nobleſt object of our deſires and purſuits, he adds, "but who ſhall be ſufficient to inſtruct us in this, if God is not his guide?" In that Dialogue, which is called the *Second Alcibiades*, he repreſents Socrates, as ſaying, "that in order to know what is agreeable to "the Gods, the ſureſt method is to wait "until the Deity, in compaſſion to our infirmities, ſend us a teacher to inſtruct us in "his will:" to which the Diſciple adds, "the "divine goodneſs induces me to hope, that "that time is not far off."

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

It is ſufficiently ſtriking to an attentive mind.

EVAGORAS.

But how is this attention to be acquired? how ſhall we find the way to render theſe beautiful ideas, of which you have been ſpeaking, habitually preſent, and familiar to our minds?

SOCRATES.

Attention of mind, which is a thing ſo neceſſary to facilitate our ſucceſs in whatever we purſue, is only to be acquired by habits of application formed by degrees, and ſtrengthened by continual exerciſe. But, particularly, in order to arrive at the full and diſtinct comprehenſion of moral and intellectual truths, it is neceſſary, above all things, to retire from the tumult of paſſions, and guard againſt a life of diſſipation and ſenſuality. We muſt begin early to converſe with ourſelves, to enter deeply

into our own minds, and dwell u
thoſe clear and diſtinct notices of th
which reaſon adminiſters; we muſt
mit to its judgment all our feelings,
all our ideas; we muſt conſider the
der and deſign of things, ariſe to t
principles, and from thence procee
examine their ends; in a word, we r
be careful in diſtinguiſhing betw
that which is ſpiritual and that whi
only corporeal, between the inward
lity, and the outward appearance.
example. . . .

EVAGORAS.

Good, Socrates:—it is an examp
want; theſe are neceſſary to illuſt
truth, and it is by them that you l
the art of rendering your inſtruct
plain and intelligible to all capaciti

SOCRATES.

For example, then; ſuppoſe that
were placed in ſolitude, removed f
all objects that affect the ſenſes, an

a

a perfect tranquility of body and mind: perhaps you will think ſuch a ſituation the leaſt adapted to recal to your thoughts the Creator of all things. And yet, even here, without going out of yourſelf, or conſidering any thing but what paſſes within you, you cannot avoid obſerving certain inward motions in your bodily frame, and a conſtant ſucceſſion of perceptions in your mind. Now theſe motions and perceptions, that are utterly independent on your will, and are produced alſo without the concurrence or operation of any outward agent, muſt naturally tend to raiſe your thoughts to that Being by whom you are thus conſtituted, and whoſe wiſdom has thus arranged the motions both of your intellectual and bodily frame.

EVAGORAS.

But, methinks, ſolitude, and particularly the ſilence of the night, inſpire

a ſort of ſecret terror that renders unfit for an attention to ſuch reflections as theſe.

SOCRATES.

I am ſenſible that this is generally the firſt effect that ſolitude and darkneſs produce in the minds of Youth. But what is there more effectual to diſpel theſe impreſſions, to remove our fears, and to reſtore our tranquility in theſe moments, than this encouraging thought, that an Univerſal Providence watches over us, and protects us, and has ſo ordered all things, that nought can diſturb the juſt ſubordination and the perfect harmony which he has eſtabliſhed in the world?—

EVAGORAS.

I feel the power of this affecting truth: certainly it is every way adapted to remove our fears; and I think the confidence it inſpires is ſtill farther ſtrengthened by this conſideration, that a grateful

ful acknowledgment of the divine bounty, and a dependance upon it, a recourſe to his goodneſs for the pardon of our faults, and a ſubmiſſion of our wills to his righteous laws, will in a particular manner draw down upon us the effects of his liberality, and engage the care of his more eſpecial Providence in our protection and defence. In theſe, I think, is placed the only worſhip that can be agreeable to the Deity, a worſhip infinitely more precious in his ſight, than the richeſt hecatomb.

SOCRATES.

Certainly, Evagoras. God, who is a pure Intelligence, cannot be pleaſed with corporeal offerings, or external ſervices, any farther than as they are expreſſive of inward piety, and are attended with good diſpoſitions in the heart. So that as often as we contemplate this great Being with joy and delight, moderated by reſpect, we offer him a ſer-

vice ſuitable to his nature. And I have already obſerved to you, that we ſhould ſeek and improve every occaſion of raiſing our thoughts to the Deity.

EVAGORAS.

Don't you think, Socrates, that rural objects are adapted to recall God to the mind, and that in the moſt natural and affecting manner? When I walk abroad, or even but open my window, and ſee before me an extenſive proſpect of fertile plains, diverſified with ſhady groves, and interſperſed with numerous and crowded villages, that are marks of a wealthy and flouriſhing country; when I ſee theſe meadows, whoſe verdure is conſtantly refreſhed by winding rivulets that ſend their moiſture in endleſs meanders thro' the fruitful ground, and that diſtant lawn terminated by a ridge of mountains, which hide their towering ſummits in the clouds; I find then, Socrates, that theſe beauties of Nature,

Nature, at firſt ſight, recall to my mind the idea of their great Author.

SOCRATES.

No doubt they do: and theſe happily are the objects that preſent themſelves moſt frequently to our view. If however we are attentive to what paſſes, we will find that the idea of a Deity does not leſs naturally offer itſelf to us in the hurry of the world, and in the tumult of cities, than amidſt the ſolitude, and charms of rural ſcenes.

EVAGORAS.

How can that be?

SOCRATES.

When we caſt our eyes upon that vaſt concourſe of people that crowd to the public places of reſort; ſenators that go to the Areopagus, merchants that come from Smyrna, Peluſium, and the iſlands of the Baleares, artiſts of every profeſſion, and ſtrangers from every country; this ſpectacle, which, at firſt ſight,

ſight, offers only a proſpect of human induſtry, will lead a thinking and attentive mind, by a natural chain of ideas and reflections, to the firſt cauſe and author of all things; it will lead us to obſerve that love of ſociety, which God has planted in man; that gift of language, that is the bond of all ſocial commerce; that variety of good things, with which he has enriched the earth; that diverſity of talents, which he has beſtowed upon mortals, that, ſtanding in need of one another's aſſiſtance, they might be engaged to ſupply each other's wants by the mutual exchange of good offices, and the reciprocal exerciſe of equity and beneficence.—There are here, Evagoras, wonderful diſplays of divine Wiſdom, and that in a rich and beautiful variety.

EVAGORAS.

Theſe reflections are certainly extremely juſt, and I ſhall not fail to make

make uſe of them when ſuch a ſcene, as you deſcribe, is offered to my view.

SOCRATES.

But do you imagine that even the Courts of Princes, which appear the leaſt proper to furniſh ſuch reflections, may not, however, naturally excite them in an attentive mind?

EVAGORAS.

I ſhould not be ſurprized, Socrates, if a mind like yours (which can diſtinguiſh *truth* and *good*, wherever they may be diſperſed) ſhould find matter for ſuch reflections even in the midſt of a Court. It is then to your diſcerning ſpirit that I muſt have recourſe to direct me in the caſe you have now mentioned.

SOCRATES.

Form to yourſelf then the notion of a day of ſtate and ceremony at the court of a great monarch. You ſee the order and ſymmetry that reigns in the midſt of all this magnificence and pomp.

pomp. The different ranks, that riſe in an exact gradation from the loweſt officer to the Prince on his throne, are diſtinctly marked out by the ſervices and duties that are attached to them. Each one acts in his own ſphere, fulfilling the duties that his ſtation preſcribes, and all concur, though in different ways, to anſwer the purpoſes of the preſent ſolemnity. Does not then, Evagoras, this regular diſpoſition lead to the idea of a more perfect ſymmetry, and a more ſublime order, that prevails in human ſociety, and reigns through the whole of univerſal nature? The ſubordination eſtabliſhed in a court is an image of that which is eſtabliſhed among men, and of the limits that are preſcribed to each rank and condition; limits, which neither Prince nor Subject can tranſgreſs, without breaking in upon the general order, and forming rebellion againſt the Sovereign of the Univerſe.—But what

what think you, Evagoras, of the circle of pleaſure? ſhall we find here any path that may lead us to the Deity?

EVAGORAS.

I think we may: in the midſt of the richeſt entertainment, and of the moſt ſplendid feaſt, I perceive ſomething that may naturally lead to theſe ſublime ideas. If the variety of the meats pleaſes my palate, and the ſound of muſic charms my ear, if the mirth of the company raiſes my ſpirits, and produces within me agreeable ſenſations; I have only to aſk myſelf, from whence theſe agreeable ſenſations come? and I immediately find that he who is the Author of all things, is alſo the author of my pleaſures, it is his wiſdom that has ſuited theſe objects to my organs and ſenſes, and while I uſe them with diſcretion, and enjoy them with moderation, I ſhall find in them a variety of entertainment and delight.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

Thus it is, Evagoras, that even amidſt the grandeur, and pleaſures of the world, thoſe who think, and reflect upon what paſſes, will be unavoidably led to admire the wiſdom, and acknowledge the bounty of the Author of the Univerſe; and all pleaſure is very imperfect, that is not referred to the great and original ſource from whence it is derived.

EVAGORAS.

In this way, then, every object will conduct us to the knowledge of our great Benefactor.

SOCRATES.

Yes, Evagoras, and of all the meditations that can employ our minds, this is the nobleſt, and the moſt fruitful of ſubſtantial comfort and ſatisfaction.—You ſeem to be fond of allegorical narrations?

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

I confeſs, I am; and I look upon them as an agreeable exerciſe to the mind. I ſee that you are acquainted with my weak ſide, by your falling upon this method of drawing my attention.

SOCRATES.

The univerſe, Evagoras, is an allegorical picture. Exerciſe then your faculties to find out its meaning, by ariſing in your thoughts to that ſovereign Mind, who dwells within this veil that conceals his eſſence from mortal eyes: employ your intellectual and moral powers in diſcovering the deſigns of this heavenly Parent, who will make himſelf known to thoſe that ſeek after him, and will be found of ſuch as ſincerely endeavour to draw near unto him. This is the Religion of the heart; this is that true, that divine Philoſophy, which alone is adapted to purify our affections,

to

to calm our anxieties, and to render man both happy and wiſe.

EVAGORAS.

I am thoroughly perſuaded that this alone is true wiſdom: THINK and SEARCH. Don't imagine, Socrates, that I ſhall ever forget thoſe two words, or the uſeful commentary that you have made upon them.

The end of the Third Dialogue.

DIALOGUE IV.

Concerning Diſſimulation.

SOCRATES, EVAGORAS.

SOCRATES.

I Suppoſe, Evagoras, you have been going through your exerciſes at the Academy?

EVAGORAS.

Yes, Socrates; you know that they uſually end at this hour.

SOCRATES.

'Tis true, I ſaw you coming from thence yeſterday about this time; but, I think, you had not ſuch a chearful countenance, as to day.

EVAGORAS.

That was becauſe I had not the pleaſure of meeting Socrates.

SOCRATES.

This is at leaſt obligingly ſaid; but, lay-

laying aſide all compliments, I muſt tell you, there was ſomething more than this, in the caſe;—you were angry, Evagoras;—I ſaw reſentment painted in your looks.—

EVAGORAS.

In my looks, Socrates!

SOCRATES.

Yes, Evagoras, in your looks; there was ſomething or other, that ſtung you inwardly, and rendered you uneaſy.

EVAGORAS.

What makes you think ſo?

SOCRATES.

I perceived it by the dry and abrupt anſwers you gave to one who ſpoke to you.

EVAGORAS.

To whom?

SOCRATES.

To Agoniſtes the ſon of Timias. Pray what had he done to deſerve this?

EVAGORAS.

Agoniſtes!

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

Yes; you refuſed to wreſtle with him.

EVAGORAS.

I confeſs it, Socrates; and I think I had ſome reaſon for this refuſal.

SOCRATES.

There is ſomething in all this, that wants to be cleared up. Tell me honeſtly, Evagoras, what it was that diſpleaſed you in this youth?

EVAGORAS.

The other day, Socrates, he aimed his Quoit in ſo aukward a manner, that it ſtruck againſt my arm, and bruiſed it violently.

SOCRATES.

Surely, Evagoras, this alone could not offend you. Such an accident may give pain, but ſhould never excite reſentment: we may be ſorry that it ſhould have happened, but ſhould by no means lay the blame upon thoſe who have been, innocently, the occaſion of it.

—Pray

—Pray did you not wreſtle with Agoniſtes?

EVAGORAS.

I did: but why do you aſk me that queſtion?

SOCRATES.

You know, that is my way.—Which of you gained the victory?

EVAGORAS.

After I had withſtood for ſome time his moſt vigorous efforts, in a cloſe and obſtinate engagement, my foot ſlipped, I know not how—I fell—and from thence he took occaſion to boaſt that he had defeated me.

SOCRATES.

Were there many ſpectators preſent?

EVAGORAS.

A vaſt multitude, and of all ranks.

SOCRATES.

Now, Evagoras, I underſtand the matter well, and muſt ſpeak to you with that frankneſs, and liberty, which our friend-

friendſhip entitles, and even commands me to uſe upon this occaſion.

EVAGORAS.

What does this mean, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Only that you were vexed at your defeat; it has put you out of humour: this is the truth of the matter, and hence the real occaſion of your uneaſineſs.

EVAGORAS.

It is true, I was filled with confuſion and vexation, to ſee one, who ordinarily is ſo much inferior to me in dexterity, gain the advantage, and that in the view of ſuch a numerous aſſembly.

SOCRATES.

This, Evagoras, is what I wanted you to acknowledge.—Agoniſtes has conquered you, and now you begin to conquer yourſelf: this is by much the nobleſt victory of the two. And I own that I was not a little diverted with the combat that has now paſſed in your

breaſt, between the vanity of *ſelf-love* and the efforts of *ſincerity*, which have been wreſtling againſt each other for ſome moments. Both the contention and the champions amuſed me mightily; ſelf-love excells in ſubtlety; *ſincerity* ſurpaſſes in force: the former leaves no ſtratagem untried, no evaſion that it does not put in practice to avoid a defeat, and it too often comes off with ſucceſs. But for this time, Evagoras, it is fairly vanquiſhed; and I, who am the only ſpectator of the combat, applaud your victory, and entreat you to purſue it.

EVAGORAS.

What remains yet to be done in this matter?

SOCRATES.

It is not enough to have thus acknowledged your ſecret reſentment: you muſt yet go farther: you muſt ſtiffle its growth; you muſt efface it in your mind.

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

But how is it poſſible to become inſenſible to ſuch an affront?

SOCRATES.

There can be no affront where there was no intention to offend. That you ſhould feel ſome inward confuſion upon reflecting on your want of dexterity, or ſtrength, is not at all ſurprizing; nor indeed is it blameable. You may be out of humour with yourſelf, if you pleaſe, but there is no ſort of reaſon why you ſhould blame your antagoniſt for doing what you would certainly have done in the ſame circumſtances. Pray do juſtice to Agoniſtes, and be impartial to yourſelf: eſteem him ſomewhat more, and yourſelf ſomewhat leſs, and then all will go well. I love you, Evagoras, and for that very reaſon I am not at all ſorry that this event has happened to you.

EVAGORAS.

There is however ſomething extraordinary in this manner of ſhewing your friendſhip.

SOCRATES.

Extraordinary as it may ſeem, it is your real good that I have here in view. Is it not true that you were deeply mortified by the event we ſpeak of?

EVAGORAS.

I acknowledge, that I was.

SOCRATES.

You would of conſequence have been equally elated with the glory of a victory; for thoſe feelings, and paſſions that counterbalance one another, bear generally a juſt proportion in the degrees of their intenſeneſs.

EVAGORAS.

This I believe to be almoſt always the caſe.

SOCRATES.

If then your diſpleaſure in the preſent

ſent caſe goes the length of vexation and reſentment, your joy, had the event turned out otherwiſe, would, no doubt, have degenerated into inſolence and vain-glory.

EVAGORAS.

This is but too poſſible.

SOCRATES.

Yes, Evagoras, I have a ſtrong notion that repeated ſucceſs would elate you too much, render you arrogant and preſumptuous, and draw upon you the envy of your friends. It is much better, that glory ſhould be divided, and that each one ſhould have his part in the diſtribution. This maintains that equality which is ſo eſſential to friendſhip, and that modeſty which is ſo requiſite in man.

EVAGORAS.

I ſee very well, Socrates, the tendency of your diſcourſe, and, to ſhew you that I know how to make uſe of your in-

ſtructions, I ſhall immediately ſeek an opportunity of embracing Agoniſtes.

SOCRATES.

This declaration, my dear Evagoras, gives me the higheſt ſatisfaction. Now is your victory complete, and you may claim the glory of a double triumph; for, after having conquered your vanity, you have alſo vanquiſhed your reſentment. Herein conſiſts true greatneſs of ſoul, and I ſee in a Prince ſo capable of governing himſelf, the true Hero, that is alone worthy to command others.

EVAGORAS.

It is to you, Socrates, that I ſtand indebted for the honour of this little triumph. But, to clear up perfectly the ſubject before us, I would be glad to know, whether you do not approve of that noble ambition that has for its objects the approbation of the Public, and a conſpicious appearance in the eye of the world?

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

No doubt, Evagoras, the eſteem of others is precious in itſelf, and is a moſt powerful motive to animate us to virtue. But never imagine, that capacity and talents can alone attract the approbation of the Wiſe; this is due principally to virtue, and among the virtues, you know the diſtinguiſhed rank that is given to *ſincerity* and modeſty.

EVAGORAS.

But the *ſincerity* you ſpeak of does not ſurely oblige us to ſay every thing we know, and to make an open declaration of our ſecret ſentiments.

SOCRATES.

By no means, Evagoras; this would be indiſcretion; but candour and ſincerity muſt be directed by prudence. We muſt keep our own ſecrets, and alſo thoſe that are entruſted with us by others. Neither is it always proper to diſcover the little eſteem we have for

certain perſons, or to reveal our ſentiments when they would only be offenſive, without doing ſervice. But, at the ſame time, a man of probity will never ſpeak againſt his inward perſuaſion; he will never conceal a truth that may be uſeful; nor, if he is aſked, will he diſſemble even in things that are indifferent; but in a more eſpecial manner he will cautiouſly avoid all ſorts of equivocation and artifice. One of my neighbours in the country is often heard to ſay, "that nothing rolls eaſier than a bowl."

EVAGORAS.

By this he certainly means that the man who goes roundly to work (if I may uſe the expreſſion) who is plain and ingenuous in his diſcourſe and in his proceedings, will ſucceed the beſt in his affairs, and find the leaſt oppoſition, and incumbrance in his paſſage through life; and doubtleſs he is in

in the right. I can give him, in return for his proverb, a maxim of one of our Sages, that has the ſame tendency; for I remember to have read in ſome of their writings, that *Honeſty is the beſt Policy*.

SOCRATES.

Good: Evagoras, let us hold to this maxim; we have no occaſion to go any farther. But what do you think of a certain ſort of diſſimulation that I perceive often in a young man of your acquaintance?

EVAGORAS.

Who is the young man you have in view?

SOCRATES.

You ſhould rather aſk, what ſort of diſſimulation I mean; for the knowledge of the perſon is not material to our preſent purpoſe; I only want to have your opinion of that kind of reſerve, which is too frequently to be remarked in his behaviour. He avoids diſcover-

ing his inclinations, his taſte, his ſentiments; and that merely through a fearful apprehenſion of being corrected or contradicted. What do you think of this, Evagoras?

EVAGORAS.

This, I imagine, may proceed from a timorous diſpoſition, or from a certain baſhfulneſs and modeſty natural to Youth: he chuſes perhaps to be rather undetermined in his taſte, and inclinations, than to be thought poſitive and obſtinate in maintaining any particular opinion.

SOCRATES.

To be wholly undetermined, to be without any prevailing inclination, and deſire, are marks of that indolence which differs little from ſtupidity; but to fear the diſcovery of our notions to ſuch as we may converſe with familiarly, to intimates and friends who are willing to afford us direction and advice; this leaves too

too much room to ſuſpect that under the cover of timorouſneſs there lies concealed that reſerved and haughty ſpirit that is impatient of contradiction. It is much more reaſonable, and ſhews a greater degree of docility and candour, to diſcover with modeſty our ſentiments and inclinations, though this ſhould expoſe us to be corrected in the one, and diſappointed in the other.

EVAGORAS.

But why reveal thoſe ſentiments, which, we fear, are not juſt, and which conſequently may be diſadvantageous to us in the opinion of others?

SOCRATES.

I have already inſinuated that the prudent exerciſe of this ingenuous candour and openneſs of mind depends upon the characters and quality of thoſe with whom we converſe. If we are among ſtrangers, who are little diſpoſed either to excuſe our faults, or to correct our

errors; in ſuch a caſe, the circumſpection and caution of which you have been ſpeaking, are juſt and well-placed; but with friends, who only obſerve our faults with a deſign to admoniſh us kindly, and render us a real ſervice by correcting them, the caſe is quite different: not to think aloud with ſuch, is to be wanting in the duty we owe to them, and alſo in the regard which we owe to ourſelves.

EVAGORAS.

I ſhould rather imagine that caution even among ſuch were the moſt likely way to preſerve a place in their friendſhip, and to ſecure to us their eſteem.

SOCRATES.

On the contrary, the diſcovery of your artifice will leſſen you in their eſteem; and ſooner or later this diſcovery muſt be made; for to think of carrying on the counterfeit long, that is impoſſible: a man might as reaſonably

hope

hope to conceal himſelf under a covering of net-work, as to hide his inward and real character from thoſe whom he conſtantly frequents.

EVAGORAS.

But you will at leaſt allow that by this caution and reſerve, this prudent artifice in concealing our weakneſſes, we ſhew a delicacy that is decent and laudable.

SOCRATES.

This is falſe ſhame, and not delicacy. True delicacy will not harbour faults, and true modeſty will own them, to have them removed. Employ in correcting your faults the pains which you take to conceal them; this is the effect that true and ingenuous ſhame ſhould produce. Let us ſuppoſe a Patient, to whom his Phyſician addreſſes a variety of queſtions concerning the ſtate of his health, his conſtitution, and the diet or regimen he obſerves; pray how do

do you think he ſhould anſwer in ſuch a caſe?

EVAGORAS.

Certainly he would do wrong in concealing the leaſt circumſtance; for how, otherwiſe, ſhould the phyſician be rendered capable of giving him the advice that is ſuitable to his condition?

SOCRATES.

And do not you believe, Evagoras, that the mind has its infirmities and diſeaſes as well as the body?

EVAGORAS.

Yes, Socrates; and I have heard you ſay that ignorance, error, and vice are ſo many diſeaſes of the ſoul, and that wiſdom, on the contrary, is its ſoundneſs and its health.

SOCRATES.

And at what period of life do you think man the moſt expoſed to this kind of infirmities or mental diſeaſes?

EVA-

EVAGORAS.

I imagine it muſt be at that age, when the mind is not as yet formed, for want of experience; for then the paſſions are ſtrong, and reaſon is feeble.

SOCRATES.

You ſee therefore, Evagoras, that at this age, which is the early ſeaſon of childhood and youth, it is abſolutely neceſſary to have ſome one, to whom we can diſcover our ſentiments and inclinations without reſerve.

EVAGORAS.

I ſee indeed how neceſſary it is to have, for this purpoſe, ſome one that is capable of healing theſe infirmities; and for my own part, I think I cannot addreſs myſelf better, than to the able phyſician who is ſo well acquainted with my mental conſtitution.

SOCRATES.

I deſire your confidence with no other view than that I may become your phyſician

ſician in this reſpect; this is the only title upon which I pretend to that truſt which you ſhall think proper to place in me. Be aſſured that he who deceives others by concealing his faults, is his own dupe, and that in the worſt ſenſe, as by this he is deprived of the beſt means both of knowing and removing his errors. It is only by ſhewing ourſelves as we really are, that we can learn to become what we ought to be.

EVAGORAS.

This is a maxim that deſerves a place among the many excellent ones I have received from you; and might I not add to this, that by indulging themſelves without reſtraint in theſe little artifices men inſenſibly contract prevailing habits of diſſimulation and hypocriſy?

SOCRATES.

I love you, Evagoras, for this obſervation: it is admirably juſt, and is alſo

alſo of the higheſt importance in the preſent queſtion. In reality, when men once give into artifice, it knows no bounds; from one point it will extend its influence to others, and form by degrees a predominant tendency to falſhood and diſſimulation.

EVAGORAS.

Nothing is more odious, than ſuch a character, and I think it is impoſſible to be too cautious in avoiding whatſoever may lead to it. At the ſame time, Socrates, what you have been ſaying neceſſarily ſuppoſes that thoſe who have the inſpection of youth ſhould allow them that liberty, which diſcovers their inward ſentiments and character, and let paſs without reproof a thouſand extravagant thoughts that float in their imagination; otherwiſe, they will early learn to diſſemble, or at leaſt be reſtrained from ſpeaking at all.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

In this you judge perfectly right, Evagoras; I have always been of opinion that young people ſhould be allowed to ſpeak without reſtraint; this is the only way to know them thoroughly: if they think juſtly we encourage; if wrong, we correct them. It is by advice applied ſeaſonably, and adminiſtered with mildneſs, that we enlighten their reaſon, and bring it by degrees to maturity and ſtrength.

EVAGORAS.

Do not you think alſo, that the ingenuous ſimplicity of nature, which appears in all they ſay, ſhould engage us often to excuſe their faults?

SOCRATES.

Aſſuredly: there is nothing that diſarms us, like an honeſt confeſſion: there is nothing that attracts forgiveneſs like ſincerity and candour; and though frankneſs and ingenuity are becoming in all,

all, yet they are in a peculiar manner the ornament of youth.

EVAGORAS.

How, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Becauſe at that age we look for the expreſſion of ſimple nature, as yet uncorrupted by the artifice of the world; and as that alſo is the critical period in which we ſtand moſt in need of counſel, ſo openneſs and candour are then moſt neceſſary to diſcover our inward ſentiments and characters, without the knowledge of which it is impoſſible to adminiſter to us that advice that is ſuitable to our condition.

EVAGORAS.

It was for this purpoſe, I ſuppoſe, that a certain Philoſopher ſaid once to a young man, *Speak, that I may ſee thee.*

SOCRATES.

Without doubt, Evagoras, and it would be an happy thing, were this ſalutary

ſalutary counſel attended to, and improved by every individual. *Diſſimulation* is a maſk that men wear expreſly that they may not be known; and it is by this deceitful vizard that human ſociety is rendered a commerce of impoſture and fraud. If we have any inclination to live in the amiable exerciſe of mutual confidence towards each other, let us leave the maſk to Comic repreſentations and Theatrical perſonages, and ſhew ourſelves in real life with the characters that belong to us.

The end of the Fourth Dialogue.

MICROPHILUS.

And what is there ſo ſurprizing in all this? Is there any thing more natural, any thing more uſual, than for young people to dwell upon ſuch ſubjects?

EVAGORAS.

Had you ſaid for young girls, you would not be far wrong. It was thus that the daughters of king Lycomedes amuſed themſelves, but the attention of Achilles was quite otherwiſe employed.

MICROPHILUS.

However, elegance and taſte in point of dreſs, and the knowledge of thoſe that are ingenious in procuring us this ſatisfaction, do not appear to me to be matters of an indifferent nature.

EVAGORAS.

The nature of the ſeaſon ſhould be conſidered in our apparel, to render it commodious; and our rank and age, to render it decent; and the care of all this ſhould be left to our taylor: but

to

to be perpetually gaping after new fashions, to be running into endless niceties and refinements in point of dress, and to make it the object of our serious occupation, this in reality is egregious trifling.

SOCRATES.

I have heard wise men say, that there is a just medium to be observed in this matter, and that we ought to steer between the two extremes which form the characters of the Sloven, and the Fop. We should not distinguish ourselves either by the negligence or nicety of our dress; let us pay to the mode the regards that decency requires, but let it neither be the subject of our discourse, nor a matter that we look upon as worthy to employ us seriously.

MICROPHILUS.

Agreed: but Evagoras can tell you that our conversation does not always turn upon such objects. We discourse frequent-

frequently upon points of ſcience, and reaſon upon uſeful paſſages of hiſtory.

EVAGORAS.

This is true: but Microphilus carries along with him, in all matters, that frivolous diſpoſition with which I reproach him, and treats even the ſolemnity of ſcience with the ſpirit of a trifler. To give you an example: we were talking, the other day, of the expedition of the Argonauts; now what do you think it was, that attracted his attention, and affected him moſt in this famous ſtory? Why, it was the mention, that ſome writer has made, of the figure of a Triton, with a large mouth, that was painted upon the ſtern of the ſhip Argos.

MICROPHILUS.

'Tis true, I cannot help laughing when I think of the figure of the Triton; I imagine that I ſee him, with his great gaping maw.

EVAGORAS.

You hear him, Socrates: ſurely this circumſtance was highly eſſential in the conduct of that renowned expedition.

SOCRATES.

Pray, then, let us know, Evagoras, what are the circumſtances in this event that draw your attention?

EVAGORAS.

My curioſity is employed in enquiring, who where the Heroes that embarked with Jaſon in this famous expedition; whether it is true that Orpheus was of the number, as ſome have imagined; by what acts of prudence or valour each one ſignalized himſelf; what was the true end of this bold enterpriſe (for the Golden Fleece is but a mere allegory;) what courſe they ſteered; what dangers and difficulties they ſurmounted in theſe early times, when navigation was in its infancy. I am curious to know how it came to paſs that ſeveral of the Con-

Conſtellations derive their names from this famous voyage. In a word, I would be glad to be informed what were the benefits that accrued to Greece from this expedition, and whether, in the reſult, they ſurpaſſed the diſadvantages with which it might be attended. This, I think, is the proper improvement that we ſhould make of the ſtudy of Hiſtory, and the end that we ſhould propoſe in applying ourſelves to it.

MICROPHILUS.

For my part, the end that I propoſe by it, is only to find ſomething that may contribute to my amuſement.

SOCRATES.

Have you done, Evagoras? or have you yet ſomething more to add to the accuſation you bring againſt Microphilus?

EVAGORAS.

There is yet one thing, which I reſerved for the laſt. Would you believe

it, Socrates, that if in the freedom of converſation, any one throws in a jeſt, a repartee, an amuſing ſtory, or a piece of wit, Microphilus will recall it perhaps three months after with a loud laugh, entirely out of ſeaſon, nay even in the midſt of the moſt ſerious converſation? I beſeech you, cure him of this weakneſs: you will in this render me ſervice, for I fear its infection.

SOCRATES.

You plead with ſuch warmth, that I find myſelf obliged to take the part of the ſtranger, and to defend him againſt you, as far as I can.

EVAGORAS.

What! is it poſſible . . . . .

SOCRATES.

A little patience, Evagoras. In the mean time, that we may converſe more at our eaſe, let us ſit down for a moment.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

Good; I am like to find here an advocate for my cauſe.

EVAGORAS.

Say rather, an equitable and competent judge.

MICROPHILUS.

But, Socrates, I think the dignity of a judge requires that you ſhould have a better place: pray ſit a little higher up, and that will give you more the air of precedence.

SOCRATES.

With all my heart: now I am as you deſire.

EVAGORAS.

Am I placed to your ſatisfaction?

MICROPHILUS.

By no means: you muſt ſit yet a little lower, and then we ſhall form a regular triangle: move you towards the right; ſo—'tis well; and I will incline to the left; that will render the order

complete, and look extremely pretty.

SOCRATES.

Have you finiſhed?

MICROPHILUS.

Hold, a moment; as Evagoras is lower than me in ſtature, he muſt ſit a little higher, that our heads may be in a line.

SOCRATES *(Aſide.)*

Indeed if Evagoras be below thee in any thing, it can only be in bodily ſize.

EVAGORAS.

Is the whole ceremonial now regulated? You ſee, Socrates, a new proof of his attachment to trifles. Are my reproaches then without foundation?

SOCRATES.

But I hope, Evagoras, that you do not blame a taſte for regularity.

EVAGORAS.

By no means: on the contrary, I highly approve of it, wherever it is neceſſary;

neceſſary; but to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by a paſſion for ſymmetry and preciſion in things that do not at all require them, and which would be every whit as well without them, this, I think, is attention impertinently placed, and is exerciſing our invention in a very trifling manner.

SOCRATES.

But is there not ſomething noble in extending our attention to the ſmalleſt matters, ſo as to let nothing eſcape our obſervation?

EVAGORAS.

I confeſs that the Omniſcient Being, the Supreme Intelligence, may embrace at the ſame time an infinity of objects, and beſtow an equal attention upon them all; but the mind of man cannot act in this unbounded ſphere: limited in its views, as well as in its power, capable only of a ſmall degree of knowledge, and activity, it ſhould employ theſe

on objects that are useful, and pass by things that are indifferent, since it cannot attend to all. And in this, I dare say, our great Hippocrates will be on my side, who said wisely, that *science is long, while life is short.*

SOCRATES.

But may not attention to small matters be considered as the mark of a vast genius, which can take in, at one and the same time, a multitude of objects?

EVAGORAS.

I apprehend that it rather proves the contrary, and that the attention which is thrown away on little things, is thereby necessarily diverted from matters of superior moment and importance. I fear much that through an attachment to trifles men come by degrees to neglect what is essential to their honour and happiness, and even to lose sight of it.

SOCRATES.

But pray, Evagoras, what do you call

call trifles? perhaps you impoſe that name upon things that have their uſes, while you laviſh the epithets of *eſſential* and *important* on matters that are not really ſuch. You muſt think that the value of things is a *relative* quality, and depends upon a great variety of conſiderations. For example; you blame Microphilus for his taſte and curioſity in point of brocades; and yet you ſee the general applauſe that is given to the Tyrian merchant lately arrived here for his judgment and ſkill in ſuch ſort of manufactures; his converſation turns principally on this ſubject, and it offends none, as far as I can obſerve.

MICROPHILUS (to EVAGORAS)

What do you think now? I knew Socrates would be more indulgent than you.

EVAGORAS (to MICROPHILUS)

Have patience a little; we are not as yet come to the concluſion; you are not

acquainted with the method of Socrates, but you will ſoon ſee where he will lead you. (To SOCRATES) In my opinion the Tyrian merchant is worthy of approbation, becauſe it is his buſineſs to be verſed in ſuch matters; this is his ſcience, this is his employment in ſociety; and this ſcience is, no doubt, uſeful in its place: but we do not however ſee ſuch perſons as Socrates applying in this way their talents and their ſtudy; and how comes this to paſs? it does not ſurely proceed from want of curioſity, or dexterity; none will venture to lay this to your charge: but the caſe is, that it becomes Socrates to employ his attention on more worthy objects and on nobler purſuits.

SOCRATES.

According to your notion, then, that which we call *great* or *little*, is *relative* to the different ranks and characters of men.

EVA

EVAGORAS.

Doubtleſs, and here I call to mind the diſtinction which we eſtabliſhed in * a former converſation, between that which conſtitutes the merit of man conſidered in general, and the relative kind of merit that belongs to each particular ſtation and profeſſion in life.

SOCRATES.

Your application of this diſtinction is ingenious, Evagoras; but can you decide by this what things are important, and what are not?

EVAGORAS.

There is nothing more eaſy: things that are important may be divided into two ſorts; of the firſt ſort are thoſe things that are eſſentially important to all men, becauſe they tend neceſſarily to render them wiſe, ſociable, and happy in every ſtate and circumſtance of life; ſuch are *piety*, *virtue*, *good-ſenſe*, and

* See Dialogue the firſt.

good-nature: theſe are of indiſpenſable importance and of univerſal neceſſity. Of the ſecond ſort are thoſe things that are only rendered important by their conformity to a certain age, a certain profeſſion, or their being proper for the accompliſhment of ſome particular end and purpoſe; of this kind are the reſpective ſciences of *Manufacturers*, *Mechanics*, *Mariners*, and ſuch like: as much as it is becoming in ſuch perſons to expatiate upon theſe arts even to the minuteſt circumſtances that concern them, ſo much would it be unſeemly in a Senator, or a General to beſtow their whole attention upon ſuch ſubjects; and as it would be ridiculous in a *Mariner* to aim at the profeſſion of a *Grammarian*, ſo would it alſo be an extravagant piece of folly in a *Rhetorician*, or an *Orator*, to employ his time in examining the ſtructure of a ſhip, or his ſtudy on matters that relate to navigation.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

I conclude from what you have been ſaying, that we ſhould attach ourſelves to the purſuit of things that are of general uſe; and then, more particularly, to thoſe that belong to our vocation in life.

EVAGORAS.

Pray tell me, Microphilus, would it flatter your vanity to be verſed in all the little details that belong to the employment of a nurſe?

MICROPHILUS.

No ſurely: what do you mean by this, Evagoras? would it become me to ſtoop to ſuch a low, ſuch a mean occupation?

EVAGORAS.

This profeſſion, however, as low as you may think it, is of general uſe, and is certainly much more neceſſary in the world, than thoſe baubles and trifles that numbers of perſons are not aſhamed to make the matter of their occupation every day.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

Do not urge the matter too far, Evagoras: you allow that the importance of things varies with reſpect to different perſons, according to their different characters and vocations; and that *great* and *little* are qualities *relative* to the ends which we are deſtined to purſue in life; ſo that what is little with reſpect to one profeſſion may be great with reſpect to another. Do not you grant this?

EVAGORAS.

I do.

SOCRATES.

And do you know that this ſingle word may make you loſe your cauſe?

EVAGORAS.

How?

SOCRATES.

Pray how do you know what th views of Microphilus may be, and wha he may propoſe to himſelf as his end i life

life? Perhaps, he has no inclination to buſineſs, nor any ambition of filling thoſe ſtations by which he might be ornamental or uſeful to ſociety. Now, if this be the caſe, you will readily grant that what you call trifles may be of great uſe to him, and that amuſing the ladies, and killing time, may be matters of no ſmall importance to one who has no other ends or purpoſes in view.

MICROPHILUS.

Hold, Socrates, I perceive the irony that lies under this apology. Certainly, it is not my deſign to act ſuch a frivolous part in life, as you now ſpeak of. My birth points out to me a higher deſtination, and I ſhould be extremely concerned, if I were not to fill an honourable rank in the ſervice of my Country.

SOCRATES.

You muſt excuſe me, Microphilus: As

As I neither was acquainted with your quality, nor your views, I was ſeeking ſome apology for your attachment to trifles; but after what you have now ſaid, I find myſelf obliged to change my ſtyle.

MICROPHILUS.

The attachment you ſpeak of will quickly paſs: it is an effect of that levity that is natural to youth: ſome time hence, I ſhall apply myſelf to more important matters. Do not you obſerve in the progreſs of nature itſelf, that the flowers appear before the fruits?

SOCRATES.

True, but you do not conſider that the fruit, yet tender, is encloſed in the flower, which aſſures us of its exiſtence, and promiſes its maturity, and thus diſplays the beautiful union of pleaſure with utility. I do not require in Youth that gravity that is becoming

in

in advanced years, but they cannot begin too early to diſcern and purſue thoſe objects that are diſtinguiſhed by their uſefulneſs and dignity: they muſt ſoon learn to look upon trifles in their true light, and to treat them as ſuch, only by way of tranſitory amuſement, without ſuffering them to occupy their ſerious thoughts, or divert them from things of greater conſequence. If this diſtinction is not made early in life, I doubt much whether it will be ever made at all.

MICROPHILUS.

You have, without doubt, ſome general principle in view, upon which you form this concluſion?

SOCRATES.

Yes, the important principle that Evagoras mentioned a little while ago, *that the limited capacity of man not being ſufficient to take in all objects, it is highly to be feared that the love of trifles will*

will produce negligence in matters of importance. But there is another great principle, which we ſhould never loſe ſight of, and which is intimately connected with the preſent queſtion.

MICROPHILUS.

And what is that, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

That *we ſhould ſet upon every object its juſt value, proportioning always the meaſure of our eſteem to the degree of its real and intrinſic worth.*

MICROPHILUS.

There is nothing more reaſonable than this maxim; and, I dare ſay, none will preſume to call the truth of it in queſtion.

SOCRATES.

Men do not deny it, but they forget it, they loſe ſight of it; and this forgetfulneſs is the ſource of almoſt all thoſe follies that degrade human nature. By this the order of things is overturned: hence,

hence the zeal with which men purſue things of a trifling nature, and their profound indifference about thoſe which are of the greateſt moment and conſequence; hence ſo much attention to the *acceſſory*, and ſo little to the *eſſential*, in the affairs of life. This perverſity of judgment is too common in the world, and was never perhaps more viſible, than in the preſent age, which we extol ſo much for the politeneſs of its manners and the elegance of its taſte.

EVAGORAS.

To clear up this, Socrates, may I aſk an example, as that is your admirable method of inſtructing?

SOCRATES.

The examples here are but too numerous. Turn your eyes towards thoſe faſhionable Sparks that ſhine in the circles of polite company; enter into diſcourſe with them upon the ſublime truths of religion, the important duties of

of life, the nature of civil government, or the intereſting diſcoveries of learning and ſcience, and obſerve with what levity and merriment they will treat ſuch ſubjects, with what a careleſs air they will diſpatch them in a moment, as if it were a matter of perfect indifference, what judgments they formed concerning them. But turn the converſation upon things that ſuit their puerile taſte, and then you will ſee the ſolemnity and zeal with which they will deſcant upon the moſt egregious trifles: here you will ſee them treat as fools, and regard with the utmoſt pity or contempt, ſuch as are not dreſt in the top of the faſhion, ſuch as are not acquainted with the neweſt inventions and the niceſt terms in the ſublime art of *good eating*, and ſuch as are ſo pedantically obſtinate as not to follow the reigning taſte in the ſmalleſt matters: here, their converſation is ſerious, and their rules are rigid;

and

and while they laviſh their jokes upon religion and virtue, they will not digeſt the leaſt banter that is levelled againſt the mode. In a word, they treat matters of importance as if they were trifles, and trifles as if they were matters of the higheſt importance.

EVAGORAS.

Surely, in this they efface the dictates of common ſenſe, and the very principles on which true taſte is founded; for, if I miſtake not, taſte is founded upon the maxim already mentioned, that every thing ſhould have the place that belongs to it, and be eſteemed in proportion to its real value.

SOCRATES.

Without doubt, Evagoras: and you do well to put the matter upon this footing, ſince many vaunt themſelves more on account of the delicacy of their taſte, than the depth of their reaſon. But leaving this ſpecies of butterflies, a more

more ſolemn kind of triflers preſent themſelves to my view; pray what do you think of our† *Sophiſts?*

EVAGORAS.

I remember to have heard you treat them pretty ſeverely on ſeveral occaſions.

SOCRATES.

And ſurely with the utmoſt reaſon, as they are really the corrupters of all true genius and taſte. The gift of

† The perſons whom Mr. Vernet repreſents Socrates as paſſing in review here, were much of the ſame ſtamp with (what are commonly called among us) the Scholaſtic writers, who rendered common ſenſe unintelligible by their intricate terms, and diſguiſed it ſo barbarouſly under the oſtentatious pomp of hard words and tedious circumlocutions, that the knowledge of their language was much more difficult, than that of the things which it was deſigned to explain. It was thus that by their vain ſubtlety they perverted language from a mean of inſtruction into a matter of ſtudy, and made that which was deſtined to unfold ſcience, a ſcience of itſelf.

ſpeech

ſpeech was conferred upon mankind as a mean of inſtruction; but how do they uſe it? They forget the end, and ſubſtitute the means in its place; they harangue out of a mere oſtentation of words; they diſplay their periods with an idle vanity, and make of language an inſtrument of declamation, that dazzles without enlightening; and of diſpute, that puzzles without convincing. The purſuit of truth ſeems with them to be out of the queſtion; eloquence and ſubtlety are all that they aim at; and this ſurely is miſerable trifling.

EVAGORAS.

From all this I conclude, that our firſt aim in all things ſhould be *truth*; and that proceeding from this principle, we ſhould purſue thoſe truths that are of the greateſt *utility*.

SOCRATES.

Your concluſion, Evagoras, is perfectly juſt: *truth* and *utility* are the two poles

poles of the rational world. Before all things, purſue what is *true*; but as all truths are not equally intereſting and important, apply yourſelf to the ſearch of *uſeful truths*, and overlook the reſt; this is the criterion of ſound judgment.

MICROPHILUS.

I have no reaſon to complain of the reproaches of Evagoras, ſince they have procured me the benefit of ſuch an inſtructive converſation and ſuch ſalutary directions. I am now perſuaded that true ſatisfaction is not to be found in thoſe little things that have hitherto ſo much employed my attention; and I am not at all ſurprized that Evagoras ſhould have ſuch a ſuperiority over me, in point of judgment, when I conſider his intimacy with Socrates. But may I not, in my turn, reproach him with unkindneſs, in not procuring me the opportunity of ſharing this advantage with him?

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

In this, Microphilus, I will do you full juſtice. You may be preſent, when you pleaſe, at our future converſations. I perceive by your accent that you are from ſome of the Grecian towns in Italy: pray, tell me, is it true that the Romans who govern in Latium, are poſſeſſed of that noble and manly ſpirit, that aims at grand and arduous purſuits.

MICROPHILUS.

It is very true, Socrates; and ſuch is their progreſs, that it is thought they will not only ſurpaſs the Greeks in valour, but excell them alſo in point of genius.

SOCRATES.

I can readily believe it; for it is viſible to me, by the ſuperficial and trifling taſte that reigns among us, that the genius of Greece tends to its decline. I have been told that theſe Romans have a moſt excellent proverb in their lan-

guage; *An eagle*, ſay they, *does not amuſe itſelf in catching flies.* O Evagoras, and you, Microphilus, be ye eagles, becauſe your rank and deſtination call you to this; ye are not born to be wrens.

The end of the Fifth Dialogue.

DIALOGUE VI.

CONCERNING

The value we ſhould ſet upon the eſteem and approbation of Men.

SOCRATES, EVAGORAS, MICROPHILUS.

SOCRATES.

I Am glad to ſee you together again notwithſtanding your late diſpute. By this I ſee that the conteſts of friends, like the quarrels of lovers, add new warmth and ſtrength to their union.

MICROPHILUS.

So it often happens, Socrates, eſpecially when the vehemence of their paſſions is moderated by the commanding influence of ſuch wiſdom as yours, and

they are reduced by it to the bounds that reaſon forbids us to tranſgreſs. We have once more, however, need of your interpoſition to bring us to an agreement.

SOCRATES.

What is then the ſubject of your preſent diſpute?

MICROPHILUS.

I was applauding that maxim of one of our Philoſophers, *Hide thy life*; but Evagoras does not at all approve of it; he is of opinion that we ſhould be ardent in the purſuit of glory, and take every opportunity of extending our fame, and of diſplaying our actions, ſo as to ſtand diſtinguiſhed in the eye of the world; and he oppoſes to my maxim the ſaying of Themiſtocles, *that the laurels of Miltiades diſturbed his reſt.*

EVAGORAS.

And is it not indeed true that the love of glory forms Heroes, while the maxim

maxim of Microphilus is only proper to cover cowardice and ſloth, by placing them in obſcurity, and thus to nouriſh low inclinations, and confine the mind to groveling purſuits?

SOCRATES.

There is, at leaſt, one caſe in which it may be prudent to follow the maxim of Microphilus.

EVAGORAS.

In what caſe, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

When we are ſo unhappy as to live under a tyrannical government; woe to ſuch as diſtinguiſh themſelves under the ſuſpicious eye of *Deſpotiſm* by ſhining and public virtues! It is obſcurity alone, that can afford here a ſecure retreat from danger.

MICROPHILUS.

I cannot think that the Philoſopher, who adminiſtred this ſalutary counſel, meant to confine it to this particular

caſe; he certainly deſigned it for more general uſe.

SOCRATES.

Tell me, Microphilus, is it poſſible for man to live alone?

MICROPHILUS.

No; he ſtands in need, no doubt, of the aſſiſtance of others; and, I know, it is a main principle with you, that we are born for ſociety.

SOCRATES.

This principle is the immediate dictate of nature. We enter into the world under a variety of relations: we have parents, friends, countrymen, with whom we live, and from whom we receive many good offices. Can we retire from the view of ſuch? and, if we could, would it be proper to do ſo? The man whoſe conduct is virtuous and decent, has no reaſon to fear the light; and I don't think Evagoras was in the wrong when he ſaid that obſcurity ſerves frequently

quently as a cover to inglorious actions.

MICROPHILUS.

The maxim then in queſtion may perhaps be more properly underſtood as deſigned to guard us againſt ambition, and to recommend to us the tranquillity of a private life; in this ſenſe, I dare ſay, Socrates will not reject it.

SOCRATES.

And why not, Microphilus? pray, tell me, is it not neceſſary that a country ſhould have its Judges or Chiefs, in ſhort, that ſome one or more be eſtabliſhed in power and authority to govern the People?

MICROPHILUS.

This I confeſs; but we ſhould leave the care of this to others.

SOCRATES.

And to whom would you leave it? to Fools, or to the Wife? to the Wicked, or to the Good?

MICROPHILUS.

It were undoubtedly to be wiſhed that the reins of government were entruſted only with the Virtuous and the Wiſe; for authority placed in bad hands is the greateſt misfortune that can befal a country.

SOCRATES.

You ſee then that the advice of the philoſopher, *to hide our life*, is, in no ſenſe, applicable to men of virtue.

MICROPHILUS.

This I perceive; but you will acknowledge at the ſame time that the ambition of ſpreading our name in the world, and of employing the tongues of the multitude, is a high piece of folly.

EVAGORAS.

I am not afraid of the judgment of Socrates in this matter; he will not ſurely condemn ſuch a noble paſſion, as the love of glory; a paſſion, that is peculiar

liar to great minds, and the incentive to virtuous and heroic deeds.

SOCRATES.

All this is well, Evagoras, provided that the love of glory be not puſhed to exceſs.

MICROPHILUS.

I ſee that our wiſe pilot ſteers juſtly between extremes, and endeavours to make us paſs with dexterity between Scylla and Charybdis.

EVAGORAS.

What is then the extreme that we ought to avoid in the purſuit of glory?

SOCRATES.

In order to explain this matter, pray tell me, Evagoras, how you would be affected, if, upon your appearing in the places of public reſort, you were ſaluted with the ſhouts of the populace, and heard them extolling the gracefulneſs of your perſon, the wonders of your valour, or the power of your eloquence?

EVAGORAS.

Such acclamations would be, to me, extremely ridiculous and inſipid: what account can be made of the capricious judgment of an ignorant multitude, who will praiſe to day, and cenſure to morrow, and who in their applauſes and their reproaches act, equally, without reaſon, and always with levity?

SOCRATES.

Does it not alſo happen, and that frequently, that the multitude laviſh their applauſe upon actions that are far from being worthy of approbation or praiſe?

EVAGORAS.

Doubtleſs the people beſtow their encomiums rather upon actions that have a ſhining outſide, and make a noiſe in the world, than on thoſe that are founded in equity and juſtice. They admire conquerors who frequently are little better than uſurpers; and extol that libera-

liberality which is often employed as a mean of corruption, and at the expence of honeſty, and probity of mind.

SOCRATES.

Still farther: I do not imagine that you would be eagerly deſirous of ſuch compliments, and encomiums, as men ſhould addreſs to you immediately, and in your preſence?

EVAGORAS.

This is the true character of flattery, which is frequently inſincere, and always dangerous.

SOCRATES.

And do you think that in the performance of our duty, and in the ſervice of our Country, we ſhould be animated by no other motives, nor propoſe to ourſelves any other end, than ſpreading our name in the world, and becoming the ſubject of its converſation and applauſe?

EVAGORAS.

By no meanst: he excellence of virtue

ſhould oblige us to the performance of our duty, and the love of our Country ſhould lead us to advance its intereſts, and engage us in its ſervice, even were there no proſpect of that honour and renown which are the natural conſequences of ſuch virtuous purſuits.

SOCRATES.

At preſent then, Evgoras, you may eaſily give us a definition of *falſe glory*; the anſwers you have made to the queſtions I propoſed, ſhew plainly in what it conſiſts.

EVAGORAS.

Falſe glory is that which is acquired by actions that are rather ſpecious and dazzling in their appearance, than juſt and equitable in their nature. It conſiſts in the acclamations of a giddy multitude, and the applauſe of flatterers. In a word, *it forms the character of thoſe, in whom the deſire of praiſe is the ſpring of action, the motive that animates their conduct, and the principal*

cipal end to which it is directed. But however this be, Socrates, it is not surely your opinion, that we ſhould deſpiſe every kind of glory, and be utterly indifferent about our reputation in the world?

SOCRATES.

Not at all, Evagoras; there is a *ſpecies* of *glory* which is *juſt* in its foundation, and *ſolid* in its nature, and which we muſt by no means treat with indifference or contempt; the divine wiſdom has eſtabliſhed *this* as a *band* of ſociety, and one of the natural *rewards* of virtue.

EVAGORAS.

And in what, pray, does this glory conſiſt, on which we are to place ſo high a value?

SOCRATES.

It conſiſts in the approbation of the Wiſe, and the eſteem of thoſe among whom we live. The point that is the moſt material here, is

is not ſo much to have a *great* reputation, as to have a *good* one. The extent of our reputation depends upon that of the ſphere in which we move, and upon the nature of that *part* that we are called to *act* upon the theatre of life: as our ſphere is larger or more confined, as our part is more or leſs eminent and conſpicuous, ſo, in proportion, muſt our glory be. It is not neceſſary to be univerſally known, but it is neceſſary to be known by virtuous actions, and by qualities that will ſhew us to the beſt advantage.

MICROPHILUS.

I do not ſee clearly the juſtneſs of the diſtinction you make here; it appears to me that to ſeek after praiſe, or to purſue the eſteem of others, is almoſt one and the ſame thing.

SOCRATES.

No, Microphilus, you miſtake the matter; *praiſe* and *eſteem* are very dif-

different things: THEMISTOCLES was ambitious of applauſe, he ſought it from all, without diſtinction, and was quite indifferent from whom it came; but the conduct of THEMISTOCLES was often dubious, and gave room for ſuſpicion. ARISTIDES was deſirous of eſteem, and it is certain that his virtue never degenerated, but was always the ſame.

EVAGORAS.

Let us then aim only at the glory of ARISTIDES; it is doubtleſs the beſt, and deſerves the preference: but I would be glad to know why eſteem is not always accompanied with applauſe?

SOCRATES.

This you ſhall ſee immediately: pray, tell me, Evagoras, do you applaud, in their preſence, thoſe whom you eſteem moſt? do you praiſe ſuch to their face?

EVAGORAS.

This I never durſt venture to do, from

from a fear of offending their modeſty.

SOCRATES.

Do you praiſe them, even when they are abſent, in pompous language?

EVAGORAS.

No, Socrates, the eſteem we have for the Wiſe and Good expreſſes itſelf in more moderate terms. We think it ſufficient to ſpeak of them advantageouſly upon every occaſion, and to render them ſervice when an opportunity is offered. Theſe marks of eſteem, which make no noiſe, and are generally indirect, are much more valuable, and undoubtedly more ſincere, than the higheſt encomiums, and the moſt pompous panegyrics.

SOCRATES.

You are perfectly in the right; the eſteem which you thus deſcribe, is really precious, and may be placed with juſtice among the greateſt bleſſings of human life.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

For what reaſon, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

Has not nature connected a pleaſing ſenſation, an agreeable *feeling* of ſatiſfaction and joy, to whatever tends to diſcover to us, in ourſelves, any amiable quality, any real perfection?

EVAGORAS.

No doubt, Socrates: we are much pleaſed with the view of excellent qualities in ourſelves; and this really is a natural allurement to engage us in their purſuit.

SOCRATES.

If a perſon reſpectable for his wiſdom ſhould cenſure your conduct, what effect would this produce in your mind?

EVAGORAS.

Ah! Socrates, I ſhould be covered with ſhame, were I ſo unhappy as to have incurred your cenſure; your diſ-

appro-

approbation would fill me with intollerable confuſion and anguiſh.

SOCRATES.

If, on the contrary, any venerable and wiſe man ſhould teſtify to you his approbation of your character, what feelings would this excite?

EVAGORAS.

A feeling of inward contentment and joy, delicious beyond expreſſion. Your goodneſs, Socrates, has ſometimes adminiſtered to me the ſweet experience of this noble pleaſure.

SOCRATES.

Would you enjoy the ſame pleaſure in the approbation of a perſon in whom you had no confidence?

EVAGORAS.

No, Sócrates, ſuch a teſtimony as yours can only convince me that I am really poſſeſſed of ſuch and ſuch perfections, of this or the other good quality: the teſtimony of perſons leſs capable

ble of judging, and leſs ſincere in their declarations, would not give me the ſame perſuaſion of my merit, or render me, by far, ſo ſatisfied with myſelf.

SOCRATES.

You will then, no doubt, approve of that common maxim, that we ſhould be indifferent about the *praiſes* of all, but thoſe who are themſelves *praiſe-worthy*.

EVAGORAS.

I find this ſaying a moſt excellent one, and by this I perceive that true honour and real glory ariſe from the eſteem of the virtuous and the wiſe.

SOCRATES.

But the eſteem of others is not only productive of a high degree of inward pleaſure, and heart-felt ſatisfaction, but is alſo a ſource of numberleſs advantages through the whole courſe and conduct of life.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

And pray, Socrates, what are theſe advantages?

SOCRATES.

You will eaſily perceive them without my aſſiſtance. Pray, is it not of uſe to a Merchant to have good *credit*?

MICROPHILUS.

Beyond all doubt, for the *credit* of a Merchant may be juſtly conſidered as the half of his riches.

SOCRATES.

And do you think he will have *credit*, if he paſſes in the opinion of others for a perſon that is unſkilful in his buſineſs, and diſhoneſt in his dealings?

MICROPHILUS.

No ſurely: his *credit* muſt ariſe from the good opinion that is generally entertained of his prudence, and integrity.

SOCRATES.

The *credit*, then, he has, and the confidence that is placed in him, are properly

perly nothing elſe but the *eſteem* of others.

MICROPHILUS.

This is evident.

SOCRATES.

Again, can we riſe to honorable employments, or advance ourſelves in the world, without the aſſiſtance of others?

MICROPHILUS.

No; our proſpect here muſt depend upon the protection of ſuperiors, or on the favour of the people.

SOCRATES.

Is it then a matter of indifference in this caſe, whether we have a good, or a bad reputation?

MICROPHILUS.

I have often heard that a good reputation clears the way to preferment; and yet we have ſeen many perſons, that were but little eſteemed, riſe to honours by artifice and intrigue; ALCIBIADES may ſerve as an example of this.

SOCRATES.

ALCIBIADES was a mixture of ſhining quali-

qualities and great defects. It is poſſible that men may ſometimes riſe to preferment by unworthy means; but if you aſk me, what is the direct road, the ſureſt path to honours and advancement, I anſwer, that it can be only conſpicuous merit, and a good reputation.

MICROPHILUS.

I perceive indeed that the *eſteem* of others is an eſſential ſtep to honours and preferment; but, ſurely, this is by no means ſo neceſſary to thoſe, who, void of ambition, ſeek nothing farther than the eaſe and tranquillity of a private condition.

EVAGORAS.

Pray, allow me, Socrates, to ſet my friend right in this matter, and alſo to uſe, for this purpoſe, your method of arriving at the truth. Tell me, Microphilus, why you were ſo nettled the other day at my jokes? they ſeemed to touch you to the very quick.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

A fine queſtion indeed! why, becauſe nothing is more diſagreeable, than to be turned into ridicule, and particularly, Evagoras, by a friend, like you.

EVAGORAS.

And what would you ſay, if I reproached you with what I heard about a month ago, in a large company, where you were accuſed of cowardice?

MICROPHILUS.

I accuſed of cowardice? where did I ever betray a want of courage? who are they that dare . . . .

EVAGORAS.

Softly, my good friend, you forget yourſelf; what are ſuch accuſations to you? You have only to deſpiſe them, as matters of no ſignificancy or importance.

MICROPHILUS.

No; thoſe perſons have injured me, and I am determined to have ſatisfaction;

on. I ſhall make them feel the weight of my reſentment.

SOCRATES.

Calm your paſſion, Microphilus; all this is but a *feint* of Evagoras, an innocent artifice, deſigned to convince you from your own feelings, that we cannot be indifferent to the reproach, or to the eſteem of others; but that their judgment, on the contrary, will always touch us in ſome point or other. The divine Wiſdom, which formed us for ſociety, has implanted in us a reciprocal regard to each other's good opinion, that by this ſort of mutual dependance we might be more cloſely, and intimately united together.

MICROPHILUS.

And is this the caſe in every ſtate and condition of life?

SOCRATES.

Undoubtedly it is: we have already obſerved that every one, in his own ſphere,

ſphere, has neceſſary connections with a certain number of perſons, and this number is not fixed to any limits; for not a day arrives, but we may have to do with ſuch as we have never ſeen before.

MICROPHILUS.

This is true.

SOCRATES.

The generous, probity, the civility, and complaiſance, that others obſerve in their conduct to us, depend, in a great meaſure, upon the eſteem they have for our characters, and the attachment that ariſes from hence to our perſons. Do you imagine, for example, that a man who is neither eſteemed by his *wife*, *children*, nor *domeſtics*, will be loved, honoured, or ſerved as he ſhould be? Will he find in them the ſame attention to gratify his deſires, and the ſame diſpoſition to reſpect his orders, that ſuch will experience whoſe deſires

and orders are reaſonable and juſt? Will they be afraid to diſpleaſe him? Will his preſence afford them pleaſure or ſatisfaction? Will his afflictions excite their ſympathy? Will they ever feel anxious apprehenſions of loſing him, as they certainly would, were he the object of their *eſteem?*

MICROPHILUS.

But will not *natural affection*, and a ſenſe of *duty* produce the ſame effects that ariſe from *eſteem?*

SOCRATES.

To give *duty* its proper influence and weight, we muſt be animated to the performance of it by ſuch motives as *touch* the heart: and you ſeem to have been ſenſible of this, Microphilus, when you mentioned the motive of *natural affection.* But ſuch *affection* muſt be founded on, or, at leaſt, ſupported by *eſteem*; it is abſolutely incompatible with indifference or contempt. A *wife* who finds

finds her *huſband* truly deſpicable, will ſcarcely be induced to give him a ſhare in her affections; *children* that are ſpectators of the irregularities of a *father* will reſpect him but by halves; *ſervants* that have found his weak ſide, will lie in wait to deceive him, ſo that, while he thinks himſelf their *maſter*, he is nothing more, than their *dupe*; and his *neighbours* and *relations*, who are ſenſible of his faults, will look down upon him with contempt. And what is there more ſhocking, than to find, wherever we go, looks of coldneſs, and indifference; and reading, in the countenances of ſuch as approach us, their inward ſentiments, to perceive clearly that they deſpiſe us? This, in reality, is a deep mortification.

EVAGORAS.

On the other hand, it muſt furniſh matter of delightful reflection in our minds, to ſee every where around us

perſons that are attached to us by real affection, and diſpoſed to ſerve us from reſpect and eſteem. If the approbation of the meaneſt ſlave is not a matter of indifference to us, how high muſt be that pleaſure, that ariſes from a perſuaſion that we ſtand well in the good opinion of all thoſe with whom we live?

MICROPHILUS.

Notwithſtanding all this, we ſee every day *friendſhips* formed, where real *eſteem* has no part.

SOCRATES.

Theſe are connections, that are founded upon *pleaſure*, or cemented by *intereſt*, but they are far from being of a durable or permanent nature. As to connections of intereſt, they are immediately broken when the advantages ceaſe, or the circumſtances change, on which they were founded. Equally tranſitory is the union that is contracted only

only for the purpoſes of pleaſure and ſenſuality: perſons of a vicious character may, for ſome time, contribute to our amuſement; we may divert ourſelves in their company; but, at bottom, we deſpiſe them, and when the ſeaſon of folly is over, they generally become the objects of our hatred. On the contrary, the ſociety of thoſe whom we reſpect and eſteem is a permanent ſource of pleaſure and ſatisfaction; it is to thoſe that we have recourſe for direction and counſel, and in them that we confide in the moſt important concernments of life. This mutual *eſteem*, as it is the only foundation of that truſt and confidence that are neceſſary to the exiſtence of domeſtic happineſs, ſo is it alſo the only *baſis* of true *friendſhip*, and its ſureſt ſupport.

EVAGORAS.

And by what means is the eſteem, which you ſpeak of, to be acquired?

SOCRATES.

By our *talents*, and by our *virtue*; theſe have ſuch a manifeſt and undoubted right to the *eſteem* of mankind, that it is not in the power, even of the Vicious and Abandoned, to behold them without reſpect and inward veneration.

EVAGORAS.

But will not the appearance of *talents* and *virtue* produce here the ſame effects that you attribute to the real poſſeſſion of them?

SOCRATES.

Not at all, Evagoras. To counterfeit the man of parts, and deceive the world by the appearance of virtue, is a taſk too difficult to be carried on with ſucceſs, and will prove in the iſſue to be uſeleſs labour; the public will not be long impoſed upon, for the cheat muſt ſoon be detected. The ſhorteſt way to arrive at our *end* here, is to *be* in reality *what* we would deſire to *appear* in the eyes

eyes of mankind. In order to this there are certain qualities indiſpenſably neceſſary, ſuch as, *integrity*, *good morals*, *application*, and *judgment*: but theſe muſt alſo be attended with other qualities that are engaging, and attractive, ſuch as *good-nature*, *complaiſance*, *and a general and uniform politeneſs of manners*. Remember, Evagoras, our former converſation, upon that which conſtitutes the *merit* of Man in general, and the *merit* of each particular ſtation and profeſſion in life; call to mind alſo the rules we laid down, the other day, for the direction of our conduct towards the various ranks to which we ſtand related in ſociety, whether as our *ſuperiors*, *inferiors*, or *equals*. From hence, if I don't miſtake, you will come to the knowledge of thoſe means that are requiſite to gain the approbation of the Wiſe, and to deſerve the eſteem of the Public.

EVAGORAS.

I ſhould think that the *public eſteem* is, in a peculiar manner, neceſſary to Princes, ſince they by their ſtation are perſons that ſuſtain a public character.

SOCRATES.

You are in the right, Evagoras, and it is preciſely towards *this* that they ſhould bend their courſe, inſtead of purſuing that idle phantom of *vain-glory*, that engroſſes their attention, and fills their heads with ſuch extravagant notions.

MICROPHILUS.

Methinks, however, that a Prince is above the judgments that the people may form of his character and conduct.

SOCRATES.

He is much leſs ſo than any other perſon, however private his condition may be; the Prince is more dependent on

on the People, than the People are on the Prince.

MICROPHILUS.

How can that be, Socrates? I am ſurprized at your diſcourſe.

SOCRATES.

You will ſee this clearly by a familiar example. Of the ſtones that compoſe an *arch*, or *vault*, which is the one that ſtands moſt in need of ſupport from the others?

MICROPHILUS.

It is undoubtedly that which is at the top of the building, and which we commonly call the *key-ſtone*; for, unſupported by the others, it muſt fall to the ground; while thoſe, that are ſo low as to touch the earth, maintain their place, independent of the reſt.

SOCRATES.

But would the other ſtones form a vault without the *key?*

MICROPHILUS.

No, ſurely; it is the *key-ſtone* that joins

and unites the reſt, and by that means forms and completes the building.

SOCRATES.

Let us then apply this to the matter in queſtion; *civil ſociety* reſembles a *vault* that is finiſhed with art, where every *family*, like the different ſtones, enters into the compoſition of the edifice, and occupies ſome place, whether it be higher or lower. The *King* is at the head, to unite and maintain together the ſeveral parts of the building; but he himſelf is ſupported, and ſuſtained by his People: he ſtands in conſtant and perpetual need of the concurrence of their hands and their hearts in his ſervice.

MICROPHILUS.

True; but theſe hands and theſe hearts are engaged in his ſervice, and concur to his views, from a principle of *ſubmiſſion*, and from the dictates of *obedience*. Princes arey obeyed, becauſe they are Princes,

Princes, and on account of their *authority*.

SOCRATES.

There is an *external* kind of *authority* that is veſted in them by the laws: but there is an authority of another nature, which muſt be added to this, and without which it is neither ſolid nor ſure.

EVAGORAS.

And pray what is this?

SOCRATES.

To give it a name, let us call it, if you pleaſe, *internal authority*. It conſiſts in that natural aſcendant that men acquire over others by ſuperior degrees of capacity and merit. Whence did ORPHEUS derive that influence, that crowned with ſucceſs his attempts to civilize the people of THRACE, tho' deſtitute of power and external authority? it was from his being regarded by that People as the wiſeſt among men. It was in conſequence of this that his counſels

were reſpected as laws, and that his example was ſet up as a model. But change the ſcene, and ſee what a wretched figure thoſe Monarchs make, with all their pomp, and all their power, who are unſupported by the affection and *eſteem* of the Public?

EVAGORAS.

Hiſtory, indeed, is fertile in examples of this latter kind.

SOCRATES.

The examples, alas! are too numerous; you ſee them in each page; and this is the ſource of their own misfortunes, as well as of the miſeries of thoſe unhappy nations that are ſubjected to their government. A Prince, whoſe character is unworthy of *eſteem*, is, even in his capacity as a man deprived by this of numberleſs comforts that ariſe from friendſhip and mutual confidence, which conſtitute the happineſs and the ſecurity of life. But in his higher cha-

racter

racter as a Ruler and a Sovereign, the contempt that purſues him is yet more fatal; by this, his authority totters and is degraded; foreign Princes withdraw from him their truſt, or neglect his alliance; and he loſes the affection of his miniſters, the reſpect of his courtiers, and the hearts of his ſubjects. Is he attacked by the bitterneſs of raillery and ſatire? all is believed that is laid to his charge, and he is thought capable of whatever is imputed to him. Are his weakneſſes diſcovered, and his evil inclinations found out? immediately the Artful and Deſigning lie in wait to abuſe his ſimplicity, and to take advantage of his humours to accompliſh their views. He is obeyed with reluctance, he is ſerved without zeal, he is ſurrounded with perſons of ſuſpicious characters, and with ſuch as are every moment diſpoſed to betray him. In a word, a Prince who is thus low in the

public

public *eſteem* is deſtitute of every real comfort, and of every ſolid ſupport; and all things about him are in confuſion and diſorder. When misfortunes and adverſity break in upon his grandeur, the Vulgar who behold them, look no farther than the apparent cauſe that immediately precedes them; but the eye of the Wiſe, that pierces deeper into things, perceives a long train of *cauſes* that have contributed to the preſent *cataſtrophe:* it ſees a *tree* whoſe roots have been gradually *withering*, and *corrupting*; and is not ſurprized that, with ſuch a weak foundation, it is at length overthrown, and demoliſhed by a blaſt of wind.

EVAGORAS.

It would not be difficult to form a *portrait*, that ſhould repreſent the reverſe of all this.

SOCRATES.

I leave that to you, Evagoras; your judg-

judgment and eloquence will furniſh you with the *lines* that are proper to compoſe it; and it will come from you with an uncommon advantage, and a peculiar grace.

EVAGORAS.

I ſhall attempt it then; ſince this is your deſire. "The Sovereign, that "knows how to blend with the dignity "of his eminent rank the engaging "charms of that *wiſdom*, *integrity*, and "*goodneſs* that are ſo naturally adapted "to gain hearts, will be honoured and "loved by his People, as a tender "father is cheriſhed in his family; he "will be obeyed from inclination, "through a perſuaſion that his com-"mands are equitable and juſt, and "that his Miniſters are choſen with "wiſdom and diſcernment. The pub-"lic taxes will be furniſhed without "reluctance, as his ſubjects are con-"vinced that they are impoſed with

diſ-

" diſcretion, and applied to good pur-
" poſes. Each individual will implore
" the bleſſings of Heaven upon his
" reign, and ſend up their fervent and
" devout petitions for the length of his
" days; the Princes round about him
" will fear to draw diſhonour upon
" themſelves by offending him, and if
" it ſo happens that he is attacked by
" any one, he will be undoubtedly
" ſupported, and defended by the reſt.
" A Prince, whoſe perſon and charac-
" ter are eſteemed, will be always ſu-
" perior in power to others, becauſe he
" will have more friends than they,
" and, at the ſame time, fewer ene-
" mies.

SOCRATES.

I ſhould have been in the wrong, Evagoras, not to have charged you with the compoſition of this *portrait*, ſince you have ſucceeded ſo perfectly, and *finiſhed* it with ſuch noble and maſterly *ſtrokes*.

MICRO-

MICROPHILUS.

But, perhaps, it will be found that the advantages ariſing from the *public eſteem* to the ſupport of Princes, and the maintenance of their *authority*, hold good only in the caſes of *elective Sovereigns*, where the Prince muſt make his way to the throne by the *voices* of the nation.

SOCRATES.

If an *hereditary Prince* does not depend upon the voice of the Nation to raiſe him to *Empire*, he nevertheleſs ſtands conſtantly in need of it to render his government *ſolid*, and his adminiſtration a *ſource* of happineſs and glory. Theſe ſignal advantages ariſe from an happy agreement between the *will* of the Prince and the *deſires* of the People, and from their unanimous concurrence in thoſe meaſures that have the public good for their object. But, beſides, to form a right judgment in this matter, we ſhould always keep in view the great

great *end* of Government, and the primitive inſtitution of *Monarchy*.

EVAGORAS.

I would be glad to have this explained more fully.

SOCRATES.

The firſt *Monarchies* were *elective*, and this was certainly the beſt *form* of government as long as men continued moderate and wiſe, for then their choice diſtinguiſhed true *merit*, and raiſed to the throne ſuch as were moſt conſpicuous by their *capacity* and *experience*. But ambition made perpetual inroads upon this fair order, that would have ſprung from *liberty*, when directed by *wiſdom*; cabals and intrigues were employed to obtain the ſuffrages of the People, and hence proceeded theſe civil wars and diſſentions, that induced moſt nations rather to run the hazard of thoſe evils that attend *hereditary Monarchy*, than to purchaſe a King of their own chuſing,

at

at ſo dear a rate. The Wiſe, however, endeavoured at the ſame time to find a remedy for the inconveniencies of this dangerous inſtitution.

MICROPHILUS.

And how, Socrates?

SOCRATES.

By the care they took to educate in the beſt manner the children of their Monarchs, and to remove from their view whatever might tend to corrupt their principles. By this precaution they did all, that was poſſible, to ſecure a *ſucceſſion* of *hereditary Princes* who ſhould be as capable, and as worthy of *Empire*, as if they had been expreſly *elected* for that purpoſe: and when ſuch precautions are attended with ſucceſs, they happily unite the advantages that are peculiar to the two different *forms* of government of which we have been ſpeaking; they anſwer the *end* of *elective* government, by providing the Nation

Nation with a wiſe Prince; while it is delivered from the horrors of *civil diſcord*, which are prevented by the eſtabliſhment of a *Lineal Succeſſion*.

EVAGORAS.

As you have now ſtated the matter, Socrates, I fully perceive how unworthy it would be of a true Prince, to think himſelf diſpenſed by the *rights* of his birth from the acquiſition of thoſe *virtues* that would have been neceſſary to entitle him to an *Elective Monarchy*. The firſt of his anceſtors that poſſeſſed the throne was certainly raiſed to it by *merit*; and the People that choſe him had a right to expect that his ſucceſſors would renew the example of his virtues, and fill his place in every reſpect. The ſame degree of elevation will always require the ſame degree of merit; and the leaſt that a Prince owes to a Nation that has rendered the *ſceptre hereditary* in his family, is, to conduct himſelf in ſuch

ſuch a manner, as that the People may never have reaſon to repent of what they have done. How glorious is it to draw from the whole body of a People this chearful confeſſion, "that if they were "to chuſe a Sovereign, their ſuffrages "would unite in that Prince only whom "the *order of ſucceſſion* has appointed "to be their ruler?"

SOCRATES.

This indeed conſtitutes the dignity, and the character of the *true Prince*. I muſt embrace you, my dear Evagoras, before we part, ſo much am I delighted, to find you poſſeſſed of ſuch noble ſentiments.

THE END.

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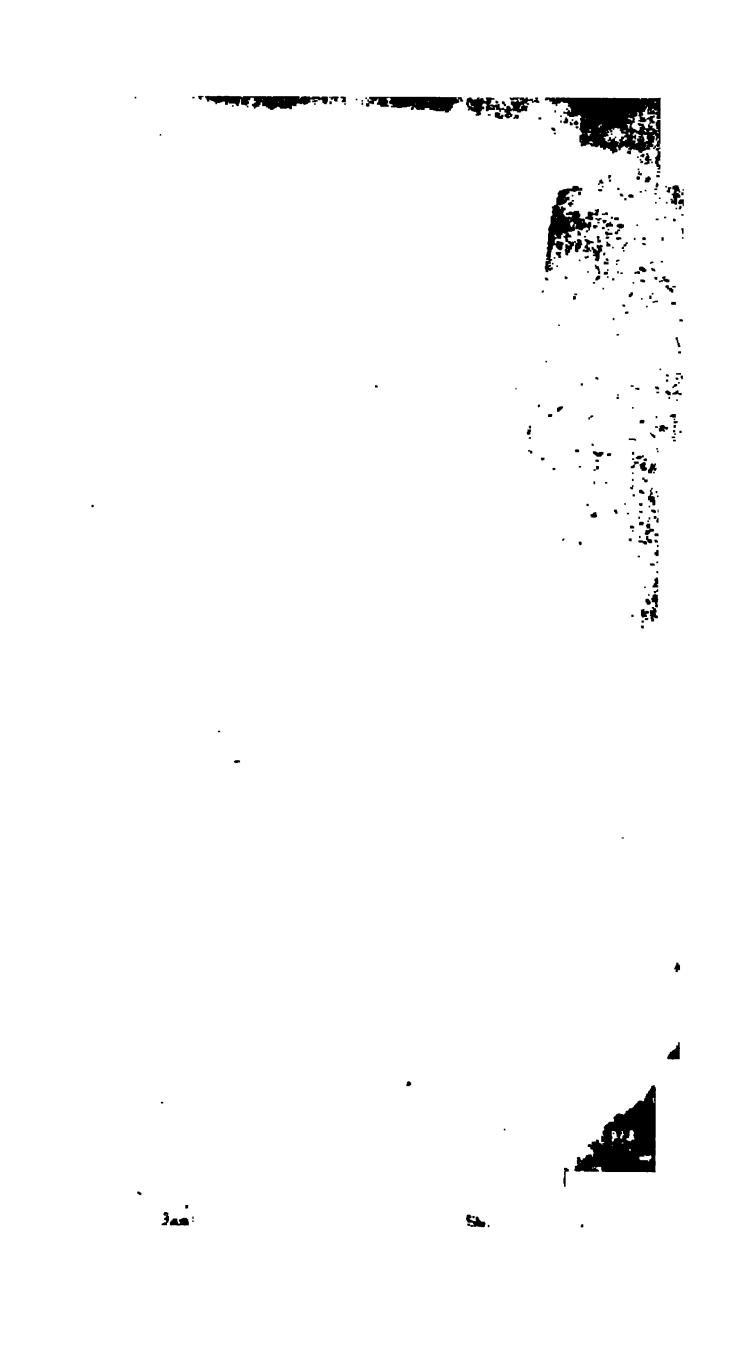
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